

FRONTISPIECE

Vol. I.



FRONTISPIECE

Vol. I.



HISTORY

AND

ADVENTURES

OF

GIL BLAS

DE SANTILLANE.

Newly Translated from the FRENCH of

M. DE LASAGE.

To which is prefixed

An ACCOUNT of the AUTHOR'S LIFE.

Illustrated with COPPERPLATES.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

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Sold by J. MASSEY, R. SPROUT, W. SALTON,
R. TONLINSON, J. DURSLEY, E. NEWTON,
G. THOMSON, W. BURKIT, H. RO-
RISON, and D. WALTON.

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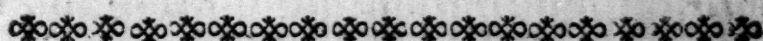
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O F
V O L U M E F I R S T.



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T H E
TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

ALAIN RENE LE SAGE was born at Ruys, in Bretany, in France, in the year 1667; and may perhaps be reckoned among those, who have written the language of their country the nearest to perfection. He had wit, taste, and the art of setting forth his ideas in the most easy and natural manner. His first work was a paraphrastical translation of Aristænetus's letter. He afterwards studied the Spanish tongue, and made a journey into Spain to acquaint himself with the Spanish customs. He generally took the plans of his romances from the Spanish writers; the manner of which nation he has very well imitated. His *Le Diable Boiteux*, in two volumes, was drawn from the *Diabolo Cojuelo* of Guevara, and his *Gil Blas*, so well known in every country of Europe, from Don Gusman d'Alfarache. There are also his *le Bachelier de Salamanque*, his new *Don Quichotte*, and some comedies, which were well received at the French theatre. He died in a lit-

the house near Paris, where he supported himself by writing, in the year 1747.

VOLTAIRE, in his age of Louis XIV. says, "M. le SAGE's romance of GIL BLAS will "always continue to be read, because he "has imitated nature in it." It is therefore hoped, that the following new elegant translation of it, free from several mistakes in former ones, will be no unacceptable present to the public.



THE



T H E

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION.

SINCE there are many persons who cannot read, without applying vicious and ridiculous characters they meet with in works of this kind to particular persons, I declare to these noxious readers, that they will do wrong if they apply any of the portraits which are in this book. I publicly confess, that my design is to represent life as it is: God forbid I should aim at any person in particular. Let no reader therefore take that to himself which may suit others as well as him; lest, as Phædrus observes, he makes an unlucky discovery of his own character. *Stultenundabit animi conscientiam.*

We find in Castile, as well as in France, physicians whose method is bleeding their patients too much. The same vices and originals are to be found every where. I own that I have not always exactly imitated the manners of the Spaniards; and those who know how disorderly the players live at Madrid, may reproach me with not having given a lively enough description of their irregularities; but I thought it necessary to soften them a little, that they might be the more conformable to our manners.



G I L B L A S

T O T H E

R E A D E R.

KIND reader, before thou hearest the story of my life, hearken to the tale I am going to tell thee.

Two scholars in their way from Pennafiel to Salamanca, being faint and weary, sat down by the side of a spring, which they found in their way. While they rested themselves there, after having quenched their thirst, they perceived by chance upon a stone, that was even with the surface of the earth, some letters, already a little effaced by time, and the feet of the flocks, that came to drink at the spring: having washed it, they read these words in the Castilian tongue: *Aqui est à encerrada el alma del Licenciado Pedro Garcias*: “Here is inclosed the soul of Peter Garcias the Licentiate.”

The youngest of the two scholars, being a pert coxcomb, had no sooner read the inscription, than he cried with a loud laugh, “Here is inclosed a soul——A soul inclosed; I wonder

“wonder who could be the author of such a ridiculous epitaph!” So saying, he got up, and went away; while his companion, who was blessed with a greater share of understanding, said to himself, “There must be some mystery in it: I will stay and try if I can unriddle it:” Accordingly, he let his companion go before him, and when he was out of sight, he dug up with his knife all the earth round about the stone, which as soon as he removed, he found a leather purse, containing a hundred ducats, with a card, upon which were written these words in Latin: “Inherit my money, thou who hast wit enough to know the meaning of this inscription, and make a better use of it than I did.” The scholar, delighted with this discovery, placed the stone as he found it, and proceeded to Salamanca with the soul of the Licentiate.

Kind reader, whoever thou art, thou wilt certainly resemble one of these two scholars; if thou perusest my adventures without paying any respect to the moral instructions they contain, thou wilt reap no benefit from thy labour; but if thou readest them with attention, thou wilt find in them, according to the precept of Horace, the **USEFUL** mixed with the **AGREEABLE**.

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THE
ADVENTURES
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GIL BLAS
DE SANTILLANE.

BOOK I.



CHAP. I.

Of the Birth and Education of Gil Blas.

[[[[LAS of Santillane, my father, after
[[B having been many years in the ser-
[[vice of the Spanish monarchy, retired
[[to the town he was born in, where he
chose a wife that could by no means be said to
be in the flower of youth. I came into the
world ten months after their marriage: they

went afterwards to live at Oviedo, where my mother served as chamber-maid, and my father as hostler. As they had nothing but their wages to depend on, I should have been in danger of being very poorly educated, if I had not had in the town a canon for my uncle, whose name was Gil Perez, the eldest brother of my mother. Represent to yourself a little man about three feet and a half high, very fat, with his head sunk between his shoulders; such was he. He was a priest who thought of nothing but of living well; and his tythes, which were pretty considerable, furnished him with the means of doing it.

He carried me home to his house while I was a child, and took the charge of my education. I appeared so sprightly to him, that he resolved to cultivate my genius. He purchased me a horn-book, and undertook to teach me to read himself; which was as useful to him as to me; for by teaching me my letters, he recovered his own reading, which he had very much neglected; and by dint of application he could very cleverly run over his breviary, which he could not do before. He had a great inclination to have taught me the Latin tongue also, because it would have saved him some money in his pocket: but alas, poor Gil Perez! he never knew the first principles of that language. He was perhaps (but this I don't say for certainty) the most ignorant canon of the whole chapter. Indeed I have been told he did not obtain his benefice by his learning, but owed it solely to the favour of some pious nuns, for whom he had been a very discreet agent; and who had
interest

interest enough to get the orders of priesthood conferred on him, without being examined.

He was therefore obliged to place me under the rod of a master, and accordingly sent me to Dr. Sodiner, who was reckoned the most skilful pedant in Oviedo. I improved so well under his instructions, that at the end of five or six years I understood a little Greek, and was pretty well acquainted with the Latin poets. I learnt Logick also, and began to argue apace: I was so fond of disputing, that I stopt passengers in the streets, known or unknown, to propose arguments to them. I met sometimes with some Irishmen, who were as fond of disputing as myself, and we made rare work of it. By our extravagant gestures, contortions, grimaces, fire sparkling in our eyes, and our mouths foaming, every one that saw us must have taken us for Bedlamites rather than philosophers.

However, by this means, I got the reputation of being a great scholar: a circumstance which pleased my uncle greatly, as he foresaw that I would not be much longer any expence to him. So, Gil Blas, (says he one day to me) thou art no longer a child, it is now full time for thee to provide for thyself; thou art now eighteen, and a notable lad: I am determined to send thee to the college at Salamanca; thou canst not fail to get some good employment there. I will give thee some ducats, and thou shalt have my mule, which you may sell at Salamanca for ten or twelve pistoles, and live upon the money till you get a place to your liking.

He could not have made me a proposal which would have pleased me more; for I had a great desire to see the world: however, I had discretion enough to conceal it from him; and when I departed, I affected the most lively sorrow, at leaving an uncle who had been so kind to me, so that the good man was touched with it, and gave me more money than he would have done, could he have seen to the bottom of my heart. Before I departed, I went to take leave of my father and mother, who admonished me to pray for my uncle, to shun ill company, and above all things to refrain from stealing. After holding forth a long time, they made me a present of their blessing, which was the only gift I expected from them; and I mounted my mule, bidding farewell to Oviedo.



C H A P. II.

How he was grievously alarmed as he was going to Penafles; with an Account of what he did when he came thither, and with whom he supped.

BEING set out on the road to Penafles, master of my own conduct, of a sorry mule, and forty good ducats, besides some reals which I had stolen from my most honoured uncle; the first thing I did was to let my mule go at discretion; I threw the bridle on her neck, took
the

the ducats out of my pocket, and amused myself in counting them over and over in my hat. As I had never seen so much money in my life, I could not help handling and gazing at it. I dare say I had reckoned it over twenty times, when my mule pricked up her ears, and stopped in the highway. I thinking she was frightened at something, looked to see what was the occasion of it, and saw an old hat upon the ground, with a great rosary upon it, and at the same time heard these words pronounced with a lamentable voice: Signior, have pity, for God's sake, on a poor lame soldier; be so good as drop a few pieces into the hat, and you will be rewarded in the other world. I immediately turned my head to the place from whence the voice issued, and saw a kind of a soldier under a hedge about ten yards from me, who supported the barrel of a carbine upon two cross sticks. At sight of this I was afraid, and did not know what to do. I took care of my ducats in the first place, put them into my pocket, and took out some reals. I then approached the hat, that was exposed for the reception of extorted charity: I threw them into it one after another, that the soldier might see how kindly I used him. He was satisfied with my bounty, and gave me as many blessings as I gave kicks with my heels into the sides of my mule, in order to get from him as soon as possible; but the plaguy beast made not the greater haste for it; she had quite forgot what a gallop was, having been so long used to going slow with my uncle.

This adventure I did not take to be a very favourable omen for my journey, I considered that something worse than this might happen before I got to Salamanca, and could not help blaming my uncle for letting me go by myself; but no doubt he did it to save expences, and had not considered the risk that I run in going alone at my years——In order therefore to repair his mismanagement, I resolved to sell my mule as soon as I came to Penafier, and to go to Astorga by the carrier, and so after the same manner to Salamanca. Although I had never been out of Oviedo, I was not ignorant of the names of the towns through which I must pass, having before I set out informed myself of them.

Having arrived safe at Penafier, I halted at the gate of an inn, that made a pretty good appearance. I no sooner alighted than the landlord came out, and receiv'd me with great civility; he untied my portmanteau, throwing it on his shoulder, and shewed me into a room, while the hostler led my mule into the stable. My landlord was the greatest talker of the Asturias, and as ready to relate his own private affairs without being asked, as to enquire into those of another that did not concern him. His name was Andrea Corcuelo, and had served many years as a serjeant in the army, but had left the service fifteen months before, to marry a young woman of Castropol, who, though she was not very pretty, knew very well the business of the house. He told me a thousand other things, which I could very well have dispensed

dispensed with; but after making me his confident, I thought I could do no less than satisfy his demands, who I was, whence I came, and where I was going. He would needs have me answer him article by article, because he accompanied every question with a profound bow, praying me to excuse his curiosity, and that with so much respect, that I could not refuse satisfying him. This engaged me in a long conference with him, and gave me an occasion to talk of my design to dispose of my mule, and go the rest of my journey with the carrier. He highly approved of my intention, and represented to me the troublesome accidents that I might be exposed to on the road; he recounted to me the many sad stories of travellers, which he enlarged on so much, that I thought he never would have done. However at last he concluded, telling me, that if I had a mind to sell my mule, he knew an honest jobber who would buy her. I let him know I should think myself much obliged for that piece of service; upon which he immediately went in quest of him.

He was not long in returning with his man, whom he recommended for his honesty, and we went into the yard all together to view the mule. My chapman examined her from head to foot, and made the hostler ride her up and down the yard, and did not fail to speak disadvantageously enough of her; and indeed there was not much to be said in her praise: however, had it been the Pope's mule, he would have had something to say against it. He assured me that mine was
good

good for nothing, and to convince me of the veracity of it obliged my landlord to vouch for it, who doubtless had his reasons to say what the jobber would have him. The latter turning to me, said gruffly, 'I hope you would not impose such a beast upon me for a good one, she is scarce worth the driving home. After the judgment which he and my landlord had passed on my mule, I took it for granted that she was as bad as they made her to be, and therefore told him that I would rely on his integrity, and bid him give me as much for her as he thought she was worth. Upon this he assuming the man of honour, replied, that by referring it to his conscience I took him by the weak side; and indeed I found it not to be his strongest; for instead of rating her at ten or twelve pistoles, which my uncle had done, he had the impudence to value her at three ducats; which I accepted with as much joy as if I had gained by the bargain.

Having so advantageously disposed of my mule, the landlord conducted me to a carrier, who was to set out next day to Astorga. The carrier let me know that he should be gone before day-break, and that he would come and call me. We presently agreed for the price, as well for the hire of a mule he was to provide for me, as for my maintenance on the road; and when that was done, I returned to the inn with Corcuelo, who told me the carrier's history by the way, and what the people said of him there. He tired me with his nonsense, and I believe would have murdered me with it, if by good luck a man of a pretty

pretty good appearance had not come and interrupted him. I left them together and went on to the inn, without thinking that I had the least concern in their conversation.

As soon as I arrived at the inn I ordered supper, and it being a fast-day, they accommodated me with some eggs; which while they got ready, I entered into discourse with my landlady, whom I had not seen before. She appeared handsome enough, and had such a way with her, that I should have concluded (even if her husband had not told me so) that she knew how to do the business of the house. When my eggs were ready, I sat down at table by myself, and had not put a bit into my mouth when the landlord came in, and brings with him the man who had stopped him in the street. This gentleman had a long sword by his side, and seemed to be about thirty years of age: he came to me with a very grave look, and spoke thus to me: Mr. Student, I am told you are Signior Gil Blas of Santillane, the flambeau of philosophy, and the ornament of Oviedo. Is it possible that your scholarship should be so deep, and that you are the sublime genius whose wit is so much talked of in this country? You do not know, continues he, addressing himself to the innkeeper and his wife, what a man you have in your house: he is a treasure, and the eighth wonder of the world. Then he turned to me, and taking me about the neck, Forgive, says he, my transports, I cannot contain the joy which your presence creates in me.

For some time I did not know what to say,
because

because he held me so fast in his arms, that I was almost suffocated for want of breath. With much ado I got disengaged from him, and said, Signior, I did not think my name was known at Penasler. How, says he, not known? We keep a register of all the celebrated persons within twenty leagues; you in particular pass for a prodigy, and I do not at all doubt but that one day Spain will be as proud of you, as Greece was of her seven wise men. These words were followed with fresh embraces, which I was obliged to suffer, though with the risk of being served like Anteus. Had I had ever so little experience, it would have been impossible for me to have been bubbled by his hyperboles: I should have known by his extravagant flattery, that he was one of those parasites which are to be met with in every town, ready to introduce themselves to any stranger, in order to cram themselves at his expence; but my youth and vanity made me judge quite otherwise of him; he appeared to me to be a man of so much honour and judgment, that I invited him to sup with me. With all my heart, cries he, I rejoice too much in my good fortune, in having met with the illustrious Gil Blas of Santillane, not to enjoy his company as long as I can. I have no great stomach, pursued he, but I will, however, eat a morsel with you out of complaisance. So saying, he set himself over against me, and a napkin being laid for him, and a fresh supply of eggs brought, he swallowed them as fast as if he had not tasted any thing for three whole days. That parcel was soon gone, and then another
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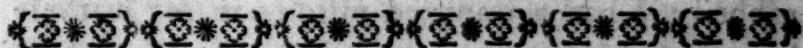
and another; he all the while finding time to overwhelm me with praises, which made me very fond of my sweet self. He drank in proportion to his eating; sometimes it was my health, sometimes it was my father's and mother's, whose happiness in having such a son he could not enough admire. Every now and then he plied me with wine, and urg'd me to pledge him in a bumper to such agreeable toasts. I was not behind hand in obliging him, and the wine, with his intoxicating flattery, put me into so good a humour, that I was not satisfied with our supper of eggs, but asked the landlord if he had no fish in the house. Signior Corcuelo, who no doubt had a fellow feeling with the parasite, said he had a very fine trout in the house, but it would come very dear, and was too nice a dish for me. What do you call too nice? says my flatterer, raising his voice; you forget yourself, friend, can any thing be too nice for Signior Gil Blas de Santillane, who deserves to be treated like a prince?

I was very well pleased, that he took up my landlord so: He was going to do it myself; and when he had done, cried, produce this trout of yours, Sir, and give yourself no trouble about the niceness of it. This was what the host wanted. He got it presently ready, and served it up to table. At sight of this new dish I could see the parasite's eyes sparkle with joy, and he eat of that with the same complaisance as he had done the eggs. However, at last he was obliged to give over, for fear of an accident, having crammed him-
self

self to the very throat: and to conclude the farce, he rose from the table, accosting me thus: Signior Gil Blas, I am too well satisfied with your good entertainment, to leave you without offering some important advice, which you seem to want. Hereafter beware of flattery, and be upon your guard against men whom you are not acquainted with. You may meet with others like me who will impose upon your credulity, and perhaps carry things still farther, but be not duped again, nor believe them, if they tell you you are the eighth wonder of the world. So saying, he laughed in my face and retired. I was as much out of countenance at having this bite put upon me, as ever I was at the greatest misfortunes that happened to me in the course of my life. I could not bear being so much imposed upon, or rather to have my pride so humbled. How, said I to myself, has the traitor then made a jest of me? His intention in accosting my landlord in the street was only to carry on his plot against me; it was a contrivance between them. Ah! silly Gil Blas, go hang thyself, for shame of being made a game of by such scoundrels. I fancy they will make a fine story of this affair, which will soon reach Oviedo, and be a mighty honour to thee. Thy parents will doubtless repent of having thrown away so much good advice on an ass. Instead of instructing me not to cheat any body, they should have cautioned me not to be cheated myself. Thus vexed with these mortifying reflexions, I locked myself up in my chamber, and went to bed, but I could not sleep: the mul-

leteer

leteer came at break of day to tell me he waited for me; I immediately got up, and while I was putting on my cloaths, Corcueto brought in his bill, where the trout was not forgotten. He not only made me pay for every thing as he thought proper to charge it, but I observed while I counted the money, the rascal grinned at the thought of the adventure. My bill being paid, I went to the carrier with my bags, wishing the inn-keeper, his inn and parasite at the devil.



C H A P. III.

How the Muleteer was tempted on the Road, and the Consequence of it; and how Gil Blas fell out of the Frying-Pan into the Fire.

TH E R E were two lads besides me, who travelled with the muleteer, the one a little quirister of Mondonedo, who went about singing where they would hire him, and the other a young tradesman of Astorga, who was returning with a young girl he had lately married at Verco. We presently became acquainted with one another; and in a short time every one told from whence he came, and whither he was going. The bride, though she was young, was so stupid and ugly, that I took no great pleasure in looking at her. Nevertheless her youth and plumpness made her very agreeable in the eyes of the muleteer, who determined to do his endeavours to gain

gain her good graces. He spent the whole day in projecting how to accomplish it, and deferred the execution of it till night. Our muleteer put up at the first inn he came to at Cacabelos, which was situated more in the country than in the town: the landlord seemed to be a complainant, discreet person, and at the request of the muleteer, he shewed us to a room, where he allowed us to sup in tranquillity; but when supper was ended, the muleteer entered the room with a furious look, and cried, S'death, I am robbed: I had a hundred pistoles in my leather-bag, and I must have them immediately, otherwise I will apply to the magistrate of the place, who will not make it a jesting matter, but will put you all to the rack, till you own with the crime, and so give back the money. Having spoken these words with a very serious air, he went out, and left us all in a terrible consternation.

As we were not acquainted with one another, none of us imagined it was a scint of his: I suspected the ballad singer had done the deed, and perhaps he thought the same of me. We were quite ignorant of the formalities used on such occasions, and doubted not but we should indeed be racked: giving way therefore to our fears, we shifted every one for himself, some running into the streets, others into the garden, and every one betaking himself to his heels for safety. And the young man of Astorga, who was as much frighted as any of us, made his escape like another Æneas, not caring what became of his wife.

wife. Then the muleteer, as I afterwards learned, was overjoyed to see his stratagem succeed so well, and went to the bride to brag of his ingenuity, intending to profit by the opportunity it had given him. But this Lucretia of the Asturias, whose virtue was strengthened by the deformity of her temper, made a vigorous resistance, and screamed out so loud, that she was heard by the watch, who by chance were passing that way; and, the inn being a house of no good repute, stopt, to listen what passed there. Upon hearing the noise, they went in, and asked what was the matter? The landlord who was in the kitchen, and pretended that he knew not what was doing, was obliged to conduct the officer to the room wherethenoise was made. They arrived at the nick of time, for the woman could hold out no longer. The officer who commanded the watch no sooner perceived what the muleteer was about, than he fell upon him with his staff, and addressed him in terms as inconsistent with modesty as the action which was the occasion of them. This was not all, he apprehended the criminal, and carried him before a magistrate, together with the assaulted woman, who notwithstanding the disorder the carrier had put her into would have gone herself, so eager was she to have justice for the outrage committed upon her. The magistrate examined her, and having attentively considered the matter, found the offender was unworthy of a pardon. He caused him to be stript and scourged in his presence; and ordered, that if the woman's husband did not appear before next day, she should be

be carried to Astorga by two horsemen, at the cost and charges of the offender.

I was more terrified perhaps than all the rest; for I ran into the country, and crossed I do not know how many fields and heaths, leaping all the ditches I found in the way, till at last I came to a forest. I entered it, and concealed myself under the thickest hedge. I had not been long there, before two men on horseback appeared before me, and called, who is there? And I being so terrified that I made them no answer, they advanced, and each of them clapping a pistol to my breast, ordered me to tell who I was, whence I came, what my business was there, and charged me to conceal nothing from them. They examined me so strictly, that I thought I was bound to answer them as sincerely as if the muleteer's threats were going to be put into execution, and the rack was before me. I replied, that I was a young man of Oviedo, going to Salamanca: I recounted to them the fright I had been in, and that I had run away from the muleteer for fear of the rack. They burst out laughing at this discovery, which manifested my simplicity, and one of them bid me have a good heart: Come along with us, and be afraid of nothing, we will carry thee to a safe place. So saying, he made me get up behind him, and rode away with me into the thickest part of the wood.

I did not know what to make of this encounter. However, I did not presume there was any thing bad in it; for, said I to myself, if they were robbers, they would have robbed, or perhaps

haps murdered me: They must certainly be some honest gentlemen, who live near this place, and who seeing me afraid, have taken pity on my condition, and out of charity carried me with them. I did not remain long in an uncertainty, for after several windings and turnings, we arrived at the foot of a hill, where we alighted. We dwell here, says one of the horsemen. I looked about to see where their dwelling should be, but could not find the least appearance of an habitation. The two men in the mean time lifted up a huge wooden trap-door, covered with earth and weeds, which concealed the entrance of a long passage under ground. Their horses went down of themselves, being used to it. The horsemen made me follow them; then letting down the cover, they fastened it with ropes that were tied to it on purpose: And thus was the hopeful nephew of my uncle Perez caught like a mouse in a mouse-trap.



C H A P. IV.

*A Description of the Habitation under Ground,
and what Gil Blas discovered there.*

I T H E N perceived what sort of people I had got amongst, and any one may easily think that the fear which the carrier had put me into was immediately dispelled by this discovery.

covery. I had now more reason to be terrified. I gave up both my life and ducats for lost; I viewed myself as a victim leading to slaughter, and followed my conductors wherever they led me, like a person that scarcely knew whether he was dead or alive. When we had gone about two hundred paces, descending all the way we went, we came to a stable, where hung two great iron lamps fixed to the ceiling, and always burning, to light the place. Here was plenty of straw, and a good many tacks full of oats, and room for twenty horses, but at that time there were only the two which we brought with us, which an old negro, who seemed to have quite lost his vigour by his age, tied to a manger.

We left the stable, and by the dismal light of some other lamps, which seemed, one would think, only to shew the horrors of the place, we came to a kitchen, where an old woman was busy in making ready supper. The kitchen was adorned with all necessary utensils, and adjoining to it was a larder well stored with all sorts of provisions. The cook, to give you a description of her, was a person upwards of sixty. In her youth her hair was of a deep sandy colour, for time had not so much altered it but that one might still see some appearance of its former hue: Her chin was long and peaked, with lips fallen in; a large aquiline nose, advancing toward her chin, and eyes of a fine purple red.

Well, Dame Leonarda, says one of the horsemen, presenting me to that angel of darkness, here is a young lad we have brought to you.

you. Then turning to me, and seeing me pale and dismayed, he bade me again not be afraid, for they would do me no harm. Having occasion for a servant to assist our cook, we happened to light upon thee, and happy it is for thee we did: Thou shalt here supply the place of a lad who died about fifteen days ago; he was a sickly youth, but thou seemest to be more robust, and will not die so soon. It is true thou wilt never see the light of the sun again; but in place of that thou shalt have a good fire, and a full belly; thou shalt pass thy time with Leonarda, who is a very good woman. Thou shalt want for nothing. I will shew thee that thou art not got amongst beggars. Come, follow me; and taking a flambeau in his hand, conducted me into a cellar, where I saw a great number of bottles and jars full of excellent wine, as he told me. I then followed him into several rooms, some of which contained bales of silk, others linen, and stuffs, and in one I saw gold and silver, and a great quantity of plate in different cupboards. After this I followed him into a large hall illuminated with three copper sconces with candles burning. There were other rooms joining to this, and lights in every one of them. He asked me my name, and the reason why I left Oviedo. When I had satisfied his curiosity in regard to these particulars, he cried, Well, Gil Blas, since you have quitted your country to obtain some good post, you may thank your stars that you have fallen into our hands. I have already told thee that thou shalt live here.

in affluence, and roll in gold and silver; besides, thou canst here come to no harm, for such is the entrance* of this retreat, that the officers of St. Hermandad* may come a hundred times into this forest, and not find it out. Perhaps thou wilt wonder how we could make it, without being perceived by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood; thou must know therefore, that this is not a work of our hands, it was made long ago. After the Moors became masters of Granada, Arragon, and almost the whole of Spain, the Christians, rather than submit to the yoke of the infidels, fled hither, and hid themselves in Biscay and the Asturias, whither the valiant Pelagio retired. Being thus dispersed in small companies, they lived in mountains and woods, some lurked in caves, and others contrived subterranean vaults like this. Afterwards being so fortunate as to drive their enemies out of Spain, they returned into the towns; since which time their retreats served for an asylum to men of our profession. It is true the holy brotherhood have discovered and destroyed some of them; but, thank God, there are still some left. I have lived securely fifteen years in this place. Captain Rolando is my name; I am the chief of this gang, and the man thou sawest with me is one of my band.

* The holy brotherhood in Spain, called *La Santa Hermandad*, was formerly an association to suppress robbers in times of civil commotion; and is still an establishment kept up through Spain for the same purpose.

C H A P. V.

How several other Robbers arrived in the subterranean Habitation; and of the agreeable Conversation they had together.

SIGNIOR Rolando had no sooner done speaking, than six new faces appeared in the hall, the lieutenant and five men more of the company laden with booty, which consisted of two bags full of cinnamon, pepper, sugar, figs, almonds, and dried raisins. The lieutenant addressed himself to the captain, and told him that he had just taken these two bags from a grocer of Benavento, whose mule he had also made his prize. When he had given his superior an account of his expedition, the booty of the grocer was deposited in the office, and it was unanimously agreed to make merry. The cloth was laid in the hall; and I was ordered into the kitchen, for dame Leonarda to instruct me in the nature of my office. There was no help for it; I must do what she ordered me; and making a virtue of necessity, I suppressed my sorrow, and went about the business she set me upon.

The first thing I had to do was to put things in order in the buffet; I adorned it with silver cups, and many stone bottles of that good wine which Signior Rolando boasted of. I then served up two ragouts, and the company immediately seated themselves at the table. They began with good appetites, and I stood behind them ready to fill out the wine. I acquitted myself with

so good a grace, that I was complimented by them in an extraordinary manner. The captain in a few words recounted to them my story, which diverted them much. He ended with saying, that I was a lad of merit. But I was at that time cured of my vanity, and could hear their praises without any danger. They said, I seemed to be born to be their butler, and was worth a thousand of my predecessor. Dame Leonarda had been honoured with presenting nectar to these infernal gods since his death, but they now deprived her of that glorious employment, with which they invested me; and I, like another Ganymede, succeeded this old Hebe.

After the ragouts were dispatched, I brought in several dishes of roast meat, which finished the repast of those gormandizing rascals, who drinking in proportion to their eating, soon became frolicksome, and very noisy. They spoke all at a time: one began a story, another broke a jest; one sung, and another shouted, so that they knew not what each other said. At last Captain Rolando, who had in vain strove to have the greatest part of the talk, assumed an air of authority, with a voice that silenced the whole company. Gentlemen, said he, I have a proposal to make to you; let us not stun one another with talking all together; would it not be better to discourse like reasonable creatures? A thought is come into my head. Since the time of our association, we never had the curiosity to inquire into each others families, and by what train of adventures we have been led to embrace this way of life:

life : methinks it is a thing we should not be ignorant of; let us relate our adventures to divert us. The lieutenant and the rest, as if they had something fine to relate, accepted the proposal of their chief with joy, who began to tell his own history in the following terms.

You must know, gentlemen, that I was the only son of a wealthy citizen of Madrid. The day of my nativity was celebrated in the family by great demonstrations of joy. My father, who was stricken in years, was ravished to have an heir to his estate, and my mother undertook to suckle me herself : my grandfather by my mother's side, who was still alive, minded nothing but his beads, and boasting of his military exploits, for he had been long in the army. I became insensibly the idol of those three persons, and was constantly dandled in their arms. Lest study should fatigue me too much in my younger years, I was allowed to spend them in the most childish amusements. My father said, that children should not apply themselves too seriously to any thing, until time has ripened the understanding. Waiting for this ripeness, I grew up without learning either to read or write. But, however, I did not lose my time, for my father taught me a number of different games. I could manage a pack of cards as well as any body, and likewise understood the dice : and my father told me stories of the several warlike expeditions which he had been concerned in; he filled my head every day with them, and made me repeat verses on so fine a subject, which I did very exactly, and my me-

mory became a subject of admiration to my parents : they seemed as well pleased with my wit, when I would break in upon their discourse, and speak any thing that came uppermost. What a charming boy he is ! my father would say, with a look full of delight, my mother overwhelming me with her caresses, and my old grandfather weeping for joy. I did in their presence whatsoever I thought proper ; every thing was forgiven, let it be never so indecent. In short, they even adored me. I was in my thirteenth year, without being put to school ; a master was at last provided : They allowed him to threaten me a little sometimes to frighten me. This permission had not the most salutary effects upon me, for I either made a jest of his threats, or with tears in my eyes went to complain to my grandfather or my mother of my preceptor's barbarity. It was in vain for the poor devil to excuse himself, he was looked upon as a tyrant, and they were sure to take my word before his. I chanced one day to scratch myself, and then cried out as if he had done it. My mother ran in and turned my preceptor out of doors, though he protested, and took heaven to witness, that he never touched me.

I got quit of all my preceptors in the same manner, until I met with such a one as I wanted ; he was a batchelor of arts of Alcala, an excellent tutor for the heir of a family, being fond of gaming, women, and wine. I could never have met with a person that would have suited me better. He strove in the first place to gain
my

my affection, in which he succeeded, and by that means got the love of my parents, who left me solely to his conduct. He instructed me betimes in the knowledge of the world, and carried me along with him to all the houses of pleasure which he frequented. I imbibed his taste so well, that, except Latin, he taught me every thing that he himself knew; and when he found I had no more occasion for his instructions he went to offer his service elsewhere.

Though during my childhood I was used to a very free way of living, it was quite another thing, when I became master of my own actions. I constantly made a jest of my father and mother, who did nothing but laugh at my sallies, which were the more agreeable the more wicked they were. There was no sort of debauchery that I was not guilty of; my companions were all of the same disposition, and as we were not supplied with money enough to support our extravagancies, every one stole what he could from his parents; but that being also insufficient, we began to rob in the dark. Unfortunately the corregidor got intelligence of us, and would have caused us to be apprehended, had we not been informed of his mischievous design. Upon this we thought it most proper to fly for it, and transferred the scene of our exploits to the highway; since which time, gentlemen, I have had the good luck to grow old in my profession, notwithstanding it is attended with so many dangers.

The captain having finished his story, the lieu-

tenant began his. Gentlemen, an education quite contrary to that of Signior Rolando has produced the very same effect. My father was a butcher of Toledo; and reckoned to be the greatest blockhead in the place, and my mother was full as ill natured as he. When I was a child, they strove who should whip me most. I daily was turned up ten or twenty times; the least fault I committed was attended with the severest chastisement, and it was endless for me to ask pardon, and promise with tears in my eyes, that I would do so no more; far from being forgiven, I was often punished though I did not deserve it. When I had been beat by my father, my mother, as if he had not exerted himself enough, would be certain to have a hand in it, and instead of interceding for me, would set him on. This usage gave me such an aversion for my paternal habitation, that I left it before I was fourteen years of age. I went through Arragon to Saragossa, where I associated myself with some beggars, who led a pretty comfortable life. They taught me how to counterfeit a blind man, to appear lame, and several other things proper to procure alms. We acted them over every morning, as players rehearse their comedies; we every one prepared ourselves for the different part we intended to act, each knowing his part; and we all met again in the evening, and enjoyed ourselves all night, at the expence of those who had had compassion on us in the day. However, in time I tired of living with these wretches, and strove to unite myself with some knights of the

the

the post, who lived by their industry. They taught me a hundred tricks; but we were obliged in a very short time to leave Saragossa, having unluckily quarreled with one of the justices, who had always protected us. Each of us took his own way. As for me, I engaged myself with a bold troop of adventurers, who put travellers under contribution, and I was so fond of their way of living, that I determined to think of no other: Gentlemen, I am therefore very much obliged to my parents for using me so cruelly; for had they treated me more kindly, I had certainly have been a wretched butcher at this day, instead of being an honourable lieutenant.

He who spoke next was a young robber who sat betwixt the captain and lieutenant. Gentlemen, says he, the stories we have heard are not so curious, nor so extraordinary as mine. I am the son of a peasant in the neighbourhood of Seville. Three weeks after I came into the world, my mother still young and handsome, it was proposed to her to nurse the son of a person of consequence in Seville, much about my age. My mother cheerfully accepted the proposal, and went to bring the child, which, as soon as she got home, she observed it resembled me. Upon this she was tempted to make me pass for the child of quality, hoping one day she would be well rewarded by me for that kind office. My father, whose conscience was not more nice than any of his neighbours, approved of the deceit; so that after she had changed our cloaths,

the son of Don Rodriguez de Herrera was put out to another nurse, under my name, and my mother suckled me under his.

Whatever fine things are said of instinct, and the strength of blood, the little gentleman's parents were easily imposed upon: they did not in the least suspect the trick that was played them. I was scarce out of their arms, till I was seven years of age. Their scheme being to make me a perfect cavalier, all kinds of masters were provided for me; but I had no inclination for the exercises they taught me, and still less relish for the sciences, in which they would have instructed me. I chose much rather to play with the servants, whom I frequently followed into the kitchen and stables. But play was not a long time my predominant passion; before I was seventeen, I learned to drink, and seduced all the women that came in the way. I was particularly fond of the kitchen maid, who seemed to me to be the most lovely of them all: She was a fat jolly wench, and I made love to her with so little circumspection, that Don Rodriguez took notice of it. He reprimanded me sharply, upbraiding me with the baseness of my inclinations; and lest the sight of this amiable object should render his remonstrances useless, he turned my angel out of doors.

I was greatly disgusted at it, and resolved to be revenged; I robbed him of his lady's jewels, and ran in quest of my fair Helen, who had retired to a washer-woman's house of her acquaintance; I went off with her at noon day,
that

that every body might know it. That was not all, I carried her into her own country, where I solemnly married her, that I might not only give Herrera the more vexation, but set a fine example for other children of quality. Three months after our marriage, I heard of Don Rodriguez's death, which news I thought was the best I ever heard in my life: I instantly repaired to Seville, to take possession of his estate; but alas! I found things strangely altered; my mother was dead too, and had been silly enough on her death-bed to confess to the curate of the parish the trick she had put upon Don Rodriguez, whose son was already in possession of my place, or rather his own; and every one was the more pleased with the discovery of his birth, on account of their being dissatisfied with me. By this means seeing that I had nothing to expect from that quarter, and having no great fancy for my fat spouse, I joined the company of some knights of fortune, with whom I began my exploits on the road.

The young robber's story being ended, another said, That he was the son of a merchant at Burgos, and, prompted by an indiscreet devotion, had rashly taken orders in his youth, and apostatized some years after. In short, the eight robbers spoke every one of his birth in their turn, and when I had heard them all, I was not the least surprised to find them together. They changed their discourse afterwards, and debated several projects for their next excursion; and having come to a determination, it being

late, they got up from table, and went all to sleep in their respective chambers. I followed the captain into his, where, while I helped to undress him, Gil Blas, says he, thou seest how we live: here we are always merry; hatred and malice never get footing among us: we never have the least quarrel among us, but are more united than monks in a convent: my child, thou art going to have a very pleasant life in this place. I do not believe that you are such a fool as to make the least scruple to live with robbers. Do you imagine there are any people in the world honestier than we? No, my lad, every one loves to take another's goods from him: this opinion is universal, though the manner of doing it be different: For example, conquerors seize their neighbours territories; persons of rank borrow without ever intending to repay; treasureurs, bankers, brokers, and all kinds of tradesmen, great as well as small, are not very nice in this point. As for the lawyers, I need not mention them, they are well enough known. However, I must own, that they are somewhat more humane than we, for we often put innocent people to death, and they sometimes save the guilty.

C H A P. VI.

*Gil Blas attempts to escape, and what was the
Success of it.*

THE captain of the robbers went to bed, after he had made this apology for his profession. I returned to the hall, where I took every thing off the table, and put things in order. I then went into the kitchen, where Domingo (for that was the name of the old negro) and Dame Leonarda were expecting me to come to supper to them. I though I was not hungry, I sat down along with them, but could not eat; and my looks shewed that I was as melancholy as I had reason to be. These two figures, equally qualified, endeavoured to console me. Child, why are you afflicted? says the old woman: you rather ought to rejoice at your good luck; you are young, and seem to be of a happy temper; consequently would have been ruined, had you lived in the world; you would have fallen in with a parcel of libertines, who would have engaged you in all sorts of debauchery, whereas your innocence will be sure here. Dame Leonarda is certainly very right, says the old negro seriously; besides, the world is full of trouble; thank heaven, my friend, therefore, that you are delivered from all the dangers, difficulties, and afflictions of this life.

I very attentively hearkened to their discourse; for to have done otherwise would have signified nothing.

nothing. The negro, after having eaten and drank plentifully, retired to the stable, while Leonarda, with a lamp in her hand, conducted me to a vault which the thieves made use of for a burying place when any of them died a natural death. I there perceived a pallet, which had more the appearance of a tomb than a couch. This is your chamber, says she; the young man whose place you have the good luck to fill, lay here while he lived, and some time after he was dead. He was fool enough to die in the flower of his age; I hope you will not be so silly as to follow his example. Saying this, she put the lamp in my hand, and retired. I set the lamp on the ground, and threw myself on the bed, not so much with an expectation of sleeping, as to give myself up entirely to my melancholy reflections. O heavens, says I, what a wretched destiny has befallen me! I am not only deprived of ever seeing the sun more, but as it were not enough to be buried alive at the age of eighteen, I am also condemned to serve thieves all the day, and be all night with the dead! These mortifying thoughts were indeed extremely shocking. I cursed my uncle's intention of sending me to Salamanca a thousand times. I repented of having run away from the justice at Cacabelos, and would have submitted to have been tortured, to have gotten above ground again. But considering that it was to no purpose to consume myself in vain complaints, I began to think how I might contrive means to escape. Is there any possibility, says I to myself,

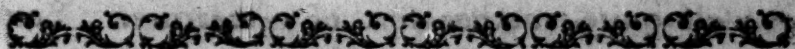
myself, of escaping from hence? The thieves are asleep, the old woman and Domingo will soon be in the same condition. Cannot I, while they are all asleep, with this lamp find out the passage by which I got into this hellish abode? It is true, indeed, I do not believe that I am able to lift up the trap-door that covers the entry, but I will try, that I may have nothing to reproach myself with. Despair will furnish me with strength, and who knows but I may be able to accomplish it.

Thus did I project this great design, and got out of my pallet, when I thought the old woman and the black were asleep. I took the lamp in my hand, and went out of the vault recommending myself to all the saints in paradise. I had a great deal of difficulty to find again all the windings of this new labyrinth, and arriving at the stable door, I at last perceived the alley I was in search of. I went on, and advanced towards the trap-door as fast as possible. But alas! in the middle of the entry I was stopped by a confounded gate fast locked, and the bars so close that a man could scarce put his hand through. I was vexed at the sight of this new obstacle, which I had not perceived when we came in. I handled the bars, and endeavoured to break open the lock, when all on a sudden I felt half a dozen hearty bangs with a bull's pizzle a-crois my shoulders; upon which I made such a terrible noise, that all the vault rung with it; and looking behind me, saw Domingo in his shirt, with a dark lantern in one hand, and the instrument

instrument of his execution in the other. So, so, you young rascal you, says he, you want to escape, do you? Do not imagine that you are too cunning for me. I heard you; you thought the gate was open, I suppose. Know, friend, that henceforth you shall always find it shut. When we detain any person here against his inclination, he must be more cunning than thee, if he can get off.

Two or three of the robbers in the mean time being awakened with my crying out, who not knowing whether it was not the holy brotherhood that was coming down upon them, got up in a hurry, and alarmed their comrades: In an instant they all rose, and seizing their arms advanced to the place where the black was chastising me; but they were no sooner acquainted with what was the matter, than their concern was changed into fits of laughter. How, Gil Blas, says the apostate thief to me, thou hast not been six hours here yet, and wantest to run away from us already! You must certainly have a great aversion to a retired life: what wouldst thou do if thou wert to turn monk? Go, get thee to bed, thou shalt be pardoned this time, on account of the correction Domingo has bestowed on thee; but if you ever endeavour again to escape, by St Bartholomew, we will flay thee alive. As soon as he had said these words, he retired. The other thieves returned to their apartments. Domingo, pleased with his exploit, betook himself to the stable again; and I sneaked back to my burying ground, where

where I passed the remainder of the night in sighing and weeping.



C H A P. VII.

How Gil Blas behaved when he could do no better.

I Was like to die with the grief that oppressed me, which continued several days after my vain attempt to escape; I could scarcely hold up my head, or stand on my feet, but at last I resolved to dissemble. I affected to appear less sad than usual, and began to be merry, though God knows I had no mind to it. In short, I put such a constraint upon myself, that the old woman and the negro were deluded by it. They imagined that custom had reconciled the bird to its cage. The robbers were of the same opinion. When I poured out the wine for them, I assumed a gay air, and would frequently put in a word among them, whenever I found an opportunity to divert them. They were pleased with the liberty I took. Gil Blas, says the captain to me one evening when I had been very merry, thou didst well to drive away melancholy; I am delighted with thy humour and wit: I find people are not known all at once; I did not think that thou wert so sprightly and good humoured.

The rest of them spoke also in praise of me, and seemed so well pleased with me, that I determined

terminated to take the advantage of the opportunity, and said, Gentlemen, allow me to inform you of my mind: since I have been here, I find myself quite another sort of a creature. You have stript me of the prejudices of education: I have insensibly imbibed your sentiments, and a desire for your profession. I wish to have the honour of being one of your brethren, and to share with you the dangers of your expeditions. My speech was applauded by the whole company, and they approved of my forwardness, so that it was unanimously determined that I should serve a little longer, in order to make trial of my vocation, and then take me out in their excursions; after which I should be admitted to the noble place I wanted. In hopes of so honourable a preferment, I persevered in my dissimulation, and still exercised my employment as butler, which circumstance greatly mortified me. For my intention of aspiring to the honour of becoming a robber, was only to have the freedom of getting out of the vault wherein I was confined, in hopes of getting away from them. These hopes supported me: I often wearied with waiting, and often strove to surprize the watchfulness of the negro; but it was never in my power, he was too vigilant. I would have desired an hundred Orpheus's to have subdued this Cerberus. It is true, indeed, I was so afraid of making myself suspected, that I did not do what I could to beguile him. He watched me, and I was obliged to be very cautious, that I might not betray myself. I therefore put off all
thoughts

thoughts of getting out, till the time appointed for receiving me into the gang was come ; and I waited for this event as eagerly as if I had then been to be admitted among the knights of the order.

I thank God, six months after, the time came, when Signior Rolando spoke thus to his companions. Gentlemen, we must keep our promise with Gil Blas ; I have a good opinion of this lad : I believe we shall make something of him ; I think we had better take him with us to-morrow, to gather laurels on the highway. We will take it upon ourselves to breed him up in the way to glory. The robbers were all of the same way of thinking with their captain ; and to shew me that they viewed me already as one of their companions, they dispensed with my serving them. Dame Leonarda took possession again of the post I had taken from her. They made me quit my dress, which consisted only of a short frock very much used, and decked me out with the spoils of a gentleman lately robbed. After which I got ready for my first campaign.



C H A P. VIII.

Gil Blas goes along with the Robbers. An Exploit which he performed on the Highway.

EARLY one morning in the month of September, I came out of the subterranean habitation

habitation with the robbers. I was armed like them, with a carabine and bayonet, a sword, and two pistols, and mounted on a very good horse, which they had taken from the gentleman whose cloaths I wore. I had lived so long in darkness, that the light dazzled my eyes, till I was accustomed to it.

We passed just by Ponferrada, and placed ourselves in ambush in a small wood bordering on the high road to Leon. We were waiting there, thinking that fortune would throw some good booty in our way, when we saw a Dominican friar, mounted, contrary to the ordinary custom of these good fathers, on a bad mule. God be praised, says the captain laughing, here is a masterpiece for Gil Blas: he must go and dismount the monk; let us see how he will behave. All the robbers were of opinion, that this commission would suit me; and they advised me to acquit myself well in it. Gentlemen, says I to them, you shall be pleased; I will strip the priest as naked as he was born, and bring you his mule. No, no, says Rolando, it is not worth the trouble; bring us only his Reverence's purse, that is all we want of thee. Upon which I immediately sallied out of the wood, and made towards the monk, begging heaven to pardon the action I was going to commit. I would willingly have made my escape that moment, but the most part of the thieves were better mounted than me, and if they had seen that I fled from them, would soon have been at my heels, and carried me back with them, or perhaps have discharged

charged their carabines at me, which I did not choose to hazard, the step being too delicate. Therefore I made up to the priest, and demanded his purse, holding my pistol to his breast, to let him see that I was in earnest. He stopt short to view me, and did not appear very much frightened: Child, says he, you are very young, you have begun this villainous trade betimes. Father, says I, roguish as it is, I wish I had begun it sooner. Ah, son, replies the good monk, who did not comprehend the true meaning of my words, What sayest thou? What blindness! Allow me to represent your unhappy condition. Father, says I, precipitately interrupting him, a truce with your morals, if you please; I do not come on the highway to hear sermons, it is money I want. Money! cries the monk in surprise: you judge very badly of the charity of the Spaniards, if you think that people of my character stand in need of money to travel with in Spain. Be not deceived, we are agreeably received every where, we are lodged, we are fed, and all that is demanded of us, is our prayers. In short, we never carry any money on the road with us, we abandon ourselves to Providence. That will not do with me, says I; you do not always give yourselves up to it, you have sometimes good pistoles upon you, to make you the more certain of Providence. But, father, let us have done; my comrades who are in the wood are impatient. Immediately throw your purse to the ground, or I will kill you.

At these words, which I pronounced with a threatening

threatning air, the priest seemed afraid for his life. Stop then, says he, and I will satisfy you, since it must be so; I perceive that rhetorical figures are useless with such men as you are. So saying, he pulled from under his gown a great purse made of shamoy leather, which he threw upon the ground. I then told him to continue his journey, which he did, not giving me the trouble to repeat it. He kicked his mule's sides, which belying the opinion I had of her (for I thought her no better than my uncle's) went off at a pretty fast pace. As he rode on, I alighted, and took up the purse, which appeared heavy; I got on my horse again, and went back to the wood as fast as possible, where the robbers impatiently waited to congratulate me on my victory; they would scarcely give me time to alight, so eager were they to embrace me. Courage, says Rolando to me, thou hast done wonders; I viewed thee all the while; I have observed thy countenance; I foretel that thou wilt make an excellent highwayman. The lieutenant and the others applauded the prediction, and assured me that one day I should certainly accomplish it. I thanked them for the great opinion they had of me, and promised to do my endeavours to support it.

After more praises than I deserved had been bestowed on me, they wanted to examine the plunder which I had brought them. Let us see, said they, what there is in the monk's purse. It must be well furnished, continues one of them, for these religious fathers do not commonly travel

vel like pilgrims. The captain untied the purse, opened it, and took out of it a parcel of copper medals, mixed with Agnus Dei's, and some scapulaires. At the sight of so uncommon a booty, all the robbers burst into an immoderate fit of laughter. Upon my soul, said the lieutenant, we are under a great obligation to Gil Blas, his first performance is a salutary one. These rascals, and especially he who had apostatized, began to be very merry upon the matter, and said a thousand things that too well denoted the wickedness of their morals: I was the only one that did not laugh at it: it is true, the railery was all at my expence, which was enough to check my mirth, had I had an inclination for it: every one had a sting at me; and the captain said, Faith, Gil Blas, as a friend, I would advise thee not to trouble thyself any more with the monks, they are a set of people too hard and cunning for thee.



C H A P. IX.

Of a serious Adventure, which succeeded that trifling one.

WE continued the greatest part of the day in the wood, without meeting with any traveller to make amends for our disappointment in the monk. We came out of it at last, intending to return to our subterranean habitation, limiting

miting our exploits to this risible adventure, which still was the subject of our discourse, when we saw at a distance a coach and four mules. They advanced to us upon a sharp trot, and were accompanied with three men on horseback, who appeared well armed. Rolando bid his company halt, to hold a council, the consequence of which was, to attack the coach. We immediately arranged ourselves in the order which he wanted, and rode up to the coach in order of battle. Notwithstanding the applause I received in the wood, I found myself seized with a great trembling, and cold sweat, which presaged nothing good. Unfortunately my place happened to be betwixt the captain and lieutenant, in the front, which I fancied they contrived so on purpose, to accustom me to stand fire. Rolando perceived the fear I was in, and throwing a frowning look at me, said with a surly air, Gil Blas, hear me, mind thy duty; if you flinch the least, with this pistol I will blow your brains out. I was too well persuaded of what he said, to neglect this warning; so I resolved to dare my fate, and recommended my soul to God.

By this time the coach and horsemen were got up with us. They knew what sort of people we were, and guessed our design by our countenances; they stopped at twenty paces distance: they had pistols and carabines as well as we; and while they were preparing to receive us, there came out of the coach a gentleman richly dressed. He mounted a led horse, and put himself at the head of those that attended him. He had

had no arms but his sword and two pistols. Still they were but four against nine, for the coachman remained on his box. They advanced towards us with a boldness that redoubled my fright; however, though I trembled hand and foot, I made ready to do as the rest did: to tell the truth, I shut my eyes when I discharged my carabine, and fixed it in such a manner, that I believe there is nothing lies on my conscience on account of that affair.

I will not give the particulars of this action; for though I was present, I saw nothing. Fear troubled my imagination much, so that it even concealed the horror of the spectacle which frightened me. All that I know is, that after a great deal of firing, I heard my comrades cry out, Victory! victory! upon which acclamation, my fear dissipated, and I perceived four horsemen lying dead on the field of battle. We had but one man killed on our side, which was the apostate, who met with a just punishment for his apostacy, and ridiculous jokes, on the scapularies. The lieutenant received a wound in his arm, but it was very trifling, the ball only razing the skin.

Signior Rolando ran immediately to the coach-door; there was a lady of about twenty-four years of age in it, who appeared very beautiful, notwithstanding the condition which she was in. She fainted during the engagement, and was not recovered when the captain came up to her. Whilst he was busy viewing her, we fell upon the booty. We began by securing the dead ca-

valiers' horses; those animals being frightened at the noise of the carabines, and pistols, broke loose after they had lost their riders. The mules never moved during the action, although the coachman had quitted his seat to save himself. We alighted off our horses to loose the mules from the coach, and load them with the several bundles which we found tied before and behind the coach. That done, the captain caused us to take the lady, who was not yet recovered from her swoon, and put her before one of the robbers who was best mounted. Then leaving on the high road the coach and stript dead men, we brought away with us the lady, mules, and horses.



CHAP. X.

In what Manner the Robbers used the Lady. Of a great Design which Gil Blas formed, and what was the Event of it.

WE got to our subterranean dwelling about an hour after night. We led our horses and mules to the stable, and were obliged to take care of them ourselves, because Domingo had been in bed three hours; besides a violent fit of the gout, he was pained all over with the rheumatism. There was nothing free of it but his tongue, which he employed in testifying his impatience by horrible

ble blasphemies. We left the miserable wretch cursing and swearing, and went into the kitchen, where we paid all our attention to the lady : We managed it so well, that at last we recovered her out of her fit. But when her senses were restored, and she saw herself in the hands of so many strange men, she perceived her misfortune and trembled. Whatever grief and despair could represent to her, appeared painted in her eyes, which she raised to heaven, as if, to reproach it for the injury she was threatened with. These dismal ideas threw her into another fit ; her eyes shut ; and the robbers imagined that death was going to rob them of their prey. The captain judging it would be better to abandon her to herself than torment her with fresh assistance from them, caused her to be put into the old woman's bed, where she lay all alone, exposed to the insults of the most wretched of mortals.

Then we went into the hall, where one of the robbers, who had been a surgeon, dressed the lieutenant's arm. That done, we then set about examining our bundles. Some were full of linen, others cloaths, and the last contained some bags of pistoles which greatly pleased the gentlemen concerned. After this examination, the cloth was laid and supper brought in. We entertained ourselves at first with the great victory we had gained. Upon which Rolando addressed himself to me, Confess, says he, Gil Blas, confess that thou wast much afraid. I replied, that I could not deny it ; but that he would see what

I would do after I had fought two or three campaigns. Upon which, all the company took my part, and said, that I should be pardoned for that time; that the action was brisk, and considering that I was a young man, who had never stood fire before, I had come off pretty well.

The conversation afterwards was concerning the mules and horses, which we had just brought into the cave. It was determined that we should all go the next day before it was light, and sell them at Mansilla, where probably they had not yet heard of our expedition. After supper, we went again to see the lady, whom we found in the same situation as we left her. Nevertheless, bad as she appeared, yet some of the robbers cast a profane eye upon her, and shewed their brutal lust, which they would have satisfied, had not Rolando stopped them, by representing that they should at least wait till the lady was recovered. The respect they had for their captain was a restriction on their incontinence. Without that nothing could have saved the lady; even death itself could not perhaps have secured her honour.

We again left this unfortunate woman in the same condition. Rolando contented himself with ordering Leonarda to take care of her, and every one retired to their respective chambers. As for me, when I lay down, instead of sleeping, I could not help thinking on the misfortune of the lady; I supposed her to be a lady of quality, and thought her more to be pitied on that account. I trembled to think of the horrors that surrounded her,
and

and felt myself as much concerned for her as if she had been my relation. In short, after having heartily bewailed her fate, I thought of means how to preserve her honour in the danger she was in, and at the same time to get us out of this subterranean dwelling. I knew that Domingo could not move, and that since his indisposition, Leonarda had the key of the grate: this thought made me form a project, which in the following manner I immediately put in execution.

I feigned to have the cholic, and cried out as if I had been dreadfully pained. The robbers awoke, and soon after came to me. They demanded the reason why I cried so. I answered, that I had a dreadful cholic; and to persuade them the more that it was so, I made a hundred wry faces, like a person very much pained. Then I lay still, as if the fit was somewhat easier. In an instant after, I rolled on my pallet, and wrung my hands as if the fit came on me again. In short I played my part so well, that, cunning as the robbers were, I deceived them all, and they thought I was terribly tortured indeed. They did what they could to assist me; one brought me a bottle of brandy, and made me swallow half of it; another anointed me with the oil of sweet almonds, whither I would or not; a third warmed a napkin, and put it very hot to my belly. I in vain cried out, hold; they thought my cholic was the reason of my cries, and continued to make me suffer real pains, to ease me of a fictitious one. In fine, not being able to endure it any longer, I told them that

I was somewhat better, and intreated them to have pity on me. They ceased fatiguing me with their remedies; and I took care how I complained any more, for fear of experiencing their assistance again.

This scene lasted almost three hours, after which the thieves judging that it was almost day, prepared to set out for Mansilla. I made as I would fain accompany them, but they prevented me: No, no, Gil Blas, says Captain Rolando, stay here, my boy, thy cholic may come on thee again; thou shalt go with us when thou art better, for to day thou art not in a condition to follow us. I did not think proper to insist any further upon going, lest they should have taken me at my word; I only appeared to be very sorry that I could not be of the party. I did this with so good an air, that they all went out of our subterranean habitation without the least suspecting my project. After their departure, for which I heartily wished, I said to myself, now Gil Blas, now is the time for thee to have resolution; take courage to finish what thou hast so happily begun. The negro is not in a state to oppose thy undertaking, and the old woman cannot hinder thy executing it: seize this opportunity of escaping, thou wilt never have a more favourable one. These reflexions gave me confidence; I rose, took my sword and pistols, and went first to the kitchen; but before I entered, I heard Leonarda speak, and stopped to listen. She was talking to the strange lady, endeavouring to console her, who, being come to herself, and considering her
misfortune,

misfortune, wept bitterly. Ay, ay, says Leonarda, sigh on, weep as much as you please, it will comfort you: your fit was dangerous, but it is now over, since you shed tears. Your grief will be appeased by degrees, and you will accustom yourself with living with our gentlemen here, who are honourable men; you will be treated like a princess; they will be very fond of you, and no doubt you will testify your affection to them. There are many women who would wish to be in your place.

I did not give Leonarda time to say any more; I entered, and with a threatening air told her, that I would immediately blow out her brains, if she did not give me the key of the grate. She was much surpris'd, and though pretty much advanced in years, was still too much attached to life to refuse my request. When I had received the key, I thus address'd myself to the afflicted lady: Madam, says I, heaven sends a deliverer to you, rise and follow me, and I will lead you where you chuse to order me. The lady was not deaf to my offer. My words made such an impression on her, that recollecting all her strength, she came and threw herself at my feet, intreating me to preserve her honour. I rais'd her up, and assur'd her, that she might rely upon me. I then took up some cords which I saw in the kitchen, and with the assistance of the lady, tied Leonarda to the foot of a great table, protesting that I would kill her, if she made the least noise. After that, I lighted a lamp, and went with the lady to the room where the treasure of gold and silver lay:

I put as many single and double pistoles into my pocket as they would hold, and made the lady also take as many as she could carry, representing to her that she only took what was her own. When we had made a good provision for ourselves, we proceeded to the stable, where I entered alone, with my pistols cocked. I imagined that Domingo, notwithstanding his gout and rheumatism, would not quietly suffer me to bridle and saddle my horse, and resolved to cure him of his ails for ever, if he resisted. But as good luck would have it, he was so violently pained at that time, that I took my horse out of the stable without his perceiving me. The lady waited for me at the grate: we quickly passed out of the alley that conducted us to the grate, which we opened, and coming to the trap-door, lifted it up with much ado. Had not the great desire of escaping strengthened us, we should never have accomplished it.

Day light began to appear when we found ourselves out of this abyss, from whence we strove to remove ourselves as fast as possible. I mounted the horse, and taking the lady on behind me, rode as fast as possible along the first road we found, and presently got out of the forest: we came into a plain, where were many roads, and took one of them by chance. I was like to die with fear, lest it should conduct us to Mansilla, and so meet with Rolando and his comrades. Happily for us, I was afraid without a reason: We arrived at Astorga about two o'clock in the afternoon. I perceived the people looked on us

as attentively as if it had been uncommon to see a woman ride behind a man. We put up at the first inn we came to, and I ordered a partridge and pheasant to be got ready for dinner. Whilst they were executing my orders, I conducted the lady to a chamber, where we entered into conversation, which we had not an opportunity of doing on the road, on account of the haste we made. She expressed herself to me, how sensible she was of the service I had just done her; and said, that after so generous an action she could not be persuaded that I was a companion of the robbers, from whom I had delivered her. I related to her my history, to confirm the good opinion she conceived of me. Upon which she put confidence in me, and told me her misfortunes, which the reader will find in the following chapter.



C H A P. XI.

The History of Donna Mencia de Mosquera.

MY name is Donna Mencia de Mosquera; I was born at Valladolid; Don Martin, my father, after having destroyed almost all his patrimony in the army, was killed at the head of a regiment which he commanded in Portugal. He left me so small a fortune, that I was but a poor match for any one, although I was an only daughter. However, I did not want lovers, notwithstanding the smallness of my fortune; many

of the most considerable gentlemen in Spain courted me, but he who attracted my attention was Don Alvar de Mello. Indeed he was gentlemanly than his rivals, but more solid qualities than this determined me in his favour. He had wit, discretion, valour, and probity; besides, he passed for the most gallant man in the world. If he made an entertainment, nothing could be more elegant: if he appeared at the jousts, his strength and dexterity were always admired: for these reasons I preferred him before all others, and married him.

A short time after our marriage, he met Don Andrea de Baesa, one of his rivals, in a by-place; they quarrelled and drew. Don Andrea lost his life, and he being the nephew of the corregidor of Valladolid, a great enemy of the family of Mello, Don Alvar thought it most proper to get instantly out of the city. He immediately returned home, where, while they were getting a horse ready for him, he related to me what had happened. My dear Mencia, says he to me, we must part. You know what sort of a person the corregidor is. Do not let us flatter ourselves; he will do every thing that lies in his power against me. You know what authority he has; I shall not be secure in this kingdom. He was so grieved at our parting, and the sorrow he saw me seized with, that he could say no more. I made him take as much gold and jewels as he could carry. Then we embraced, and did nothing but mingle sighs and tears for a quarter of an hour. At length being acquainted that his horse was
ready,

ready; he broke loose from me, and left me in a condition which I cannot represent. Happy had it been if the excess of my affliction had then killed me; but my life was spared for more troubles. Some hours after Don Alvar had set out, the corregidor was apprized of his flight, and ordered him to be pursued, sparing no pains to get him into custody. My spouse was too hard for him, and got into a place of safety. Thus the judge was obliged to satisfy his vengeance with the poor satisfaction of seizing the effects of a man whose blood he thirsted after; and he did that effectually.

I lived in this very afflicting situation, having scarce wherewith to subsist on; I began to lead a very retired life, and kept but one woman servant. I spent all my days in weeping, not for indigence, which I bore patiently, but for the absence of my dear husband, of whom I had no account. He had, however, at parting promised that he would take care to inform me of his fate to whatever place his evil stars might conduct him. Nevertheless, seven long years were gone before I heard what was become of him: the uncertainty I was in made me live in continual sorrow. At last I understood that he was slain in a battle fighting for the king of Portugal in the kingdom of Fez. I was informed of it by a person lately arrived from Africa, who assured me that he was very well acquainted with Don Alvar de Mello; that he had served in the Portuguese army with him, and had seen him fall in the action. He added to this some other circum-

stances, which fully persuaded me, that my husband was no more.

Don Ambrosio Mesia Carillo, Marquis de la Guardia, came to Valladolid about that time. He was one of those old lords who by their gallant and polite actions make women forget their age, and think them as taking as if they were young still. One day somebody by chance related to him the story of Don Alvar; and gave him such a favourable description of me, that he wanted to see me. He saw me; and though grief had made a great impression on me, he took such a liking to me, that it turned to a tender passion. Perhaps indeed he pitied my sad and mournful condition, and pity very often changes itself into love. My dismal state affected him, and he told more than once, that he beheld me as a prodigy of constancy, and even envied the fate of my husband, in having such a faithful wife, though his end was so lamentable. In short, he was so struck with the sight of me, and only wanted to see me a second time, to resolve to marry me.

He let a friend of mine know his intention, who came and represented to me, that my husband being killed in the kingdom of Fez, it was not at all reasonable that I should bury myself alive, and make my charms useless to my youth; that I had wept enough for a man who had been united to me for so short a time, and that I should take hold of the opportunity which offered, of being the happiest woman in the world. Then she boasted of the Marquis's nobility, his great estates, and his good character. But all she said was lost upon
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on me; I would not be persuaded by her: not that I thought Don Alvar was not dead, or was afraid of his returning on a sudden, when I did not expect him. I was so little inclined to marry again, or rather was so unwilling to it, after I had been so unfortunate in my first marriage, that I could not think of complying with my friend's request. However, she did not cease to entice me: on the contrary, she redoubled her zeal for Don Ambrosio: She engaged all my relations in that old lord's interests: they all advised me to accept of so advantageous a match. I was constantly importuned by them: It is true, indeed, that my poverty, which became every day greater, contributed not a little to overcome my resistance.

I could hold out no longer; I yielded to their pressing instances, and married the Marquis de la Guardia, who, the day after our nuptials, carried me to a very fine castle he had near Burgos, between Grajal and Rodillas. He was very fond of me, and did every thing that lay in his power to please me: he studied to prevent my least desires, and never was a husband fonder of a pleasing wife; never was lover more complaisant to a mistress. I should have passionately loved Don Ambrosio, notwithstanding the disproportion of our ages, had I been capable of loving any one but Don Alvar. But a constant heart can have but one passion. The remembrance of my first husband rendered useless all his endeavours to please me. I could not pay back his affection, but with pure sentiments of acknowledgement.

I was in this disposition, when taking the air
one

one day at my chamber window, I saw in the garden a kind of peasant, who looked very attentively on me. I thought that he was an assistant of the gardener's, and took but little notice of him; but the next day, being at the same window, I perceived him in the same place again, and he seemed still very much attached to look at me. This struck me; I examined his face more curiously, and fancied I perceived the features of the unfortunate Don Alvar. This thought put me into a terrible apprehension of the truth of it, and I cried out; but was then by good luck alone with Ines, who was the servant I most confided in. I told her of my suspicion; she laughed at me; thinking that some small likeness had deceived my eyes. Do not imagine it, madam, says she; what likelihood is there that your first husband should be in the form of a peasant? Can it be possible that he is still alive? I will go down to the garden, added she, and talk to this country-man. I will know who he is, and return in a moment to inform you. Accordingly she did so, and when she returned, I perceived her to be in great confusion. Madam, says she, your suspicion is too well grounded. It was Don Alvar whom you saw. He has discovered himself to me, and wants to have some secret conversation with you.

I had at that time an opportunity of receiving Don Alvar, as the Marquis was then gone to Burgos; and commanded my woman to conduct him into my closet. You may judge the terrible agitation I was in; I could not support the sight
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of a man who had too much reason to reproach me with inconstancy ; I fainted when he presented himself before me. Ines and he immediately gave me assistance, and as I came to myself, Don Alvar said, Madam, I desire that my presence may not incommode you : I do not intend giving you the least uneasiness. I am not come like a furious husband, to demand an account of the faith you vowed to me, and to charge you with the crime of the second engagement you have contracted. I am not ignorant that this is the work of your friends, and I am acquainted with the persecutions that you have suffered on that account. I know how they spread the report of my death at Valladolid, and that you yourself had good reason to think so, having received no letter from me to inform you to the contrary. In short, I know in what manner you have lived since our cruel separation, and that necessity rather than love put you in the arms of—— Ah, my Lord, said I, interrupting him, why would you excuse your wife ? I am guilty, since you live. Oh that I was now in the same situation I was in before Don Ambrosio married me ! Fatal marriage ! Alas ! I should otherwise have had in my misery the consolation of seeing you without blushing.

My dear Mencia, replied Don Alvar, with an air which shewed how much he was penetrated with my tears, I do not complain of you, and instead of reproaching you with the brilliant state which I find you in, I thank heaven for it. Since the fatal day I departed from Valladolid, fortune
has

has always been against me: my life has been but a continued series of misfortunes, and nothing made me more wretched than being deprived of an opportunity to send you news of me, and to hear from you. I was sensible how you loved me, and continually represented to myself the situation to which my fatal affection reduced you. I represented you to my eyes always in tears, and my concern for you was ever my greatest trouble. I reproached myself sometimes for having been the occasion of making you so miserable, and even wished that you had taken one of my rivals, since the preference you had given me cost you so dear. Nevertheless, after seven years sufferings, more captivated with you than ever, I wanted to see you again; I could not resist this desire, and at the end of a long slavery, permitting myself to satisfy it, went in this disguise to Valladolid, at the hazard of being discovered. There I have been informed of every thing. Afterwards I came to the castle, and found means to come at the gardener, who hired me to work in the gardens, where I might possibly have an opportunity of secretly speaking to you. But do not imagine that by my staying here I have any design of troubling the felicity you enjoy. I love you more than I love myself. I am glad to see you so happy, and the pleasure I shall take to reflect on the condition I leave you in, will be the only consolation of a life which I will end far from you, and return no more to interrupt your repose.

No, no, Don Alvar, cried I at these words, I will not allow you to desert me a second time,

I will

I will go with you; nothing but death shall henceforth separate us. Listen to me, replied he, live still with Don Ambrosio; do not accompany me in my misfortunes, let me be wretched by myself. He said a great many other things to the same purpose, but the more willing he appeared to sacrifice himself to my happiness, the less I was disposed to consent to it. When he found that I was determined to follow him, he changed his tone all on a sudden, and looking very well pleased upon me, said, Madam, since you have still so much regard for Don Alvar as to prefer his misery to the happiness you enjoy here, let us go and live at Betancos, at the farther end of the kingdom of Galicia, where I have a secret retreat prepared for us. If my misfortunes have deprived me of all my estate, they have not yet deprived me of all my friends: I have still some faithful ones remaining, who have put me in a condition to carry you off. I have by their assistance got a coach ready at Zamora. I have bought mules, and am accompanied by three resolute Galicians, armed with carabines and pistols, who now wait for my orders at the village of Rodillas. Let us therefore, added he, take the advantage of Don Ambrosio's absence: I will order the coach to come to the castle gate, and we will set out immediately. I consented; Don Alvar flew to Rodillas, and returned in a short time with his three attendants, to carry me off from the midst of my women, who, not knowing what to think of this event, ran all away in the utmost consternation:

sternation : Ines alone was privy to it ; but she refused to attach her fortune to mine, because she was in love with one of Don Ambrosio's valet-de-chambres.

I got into the coach with Don Alvar, taking nothing with me but my own cloaths and some jewels which I had before my second marriage ; for I would take nothing that belonged to the Marquis. We took the road to the kingdom of Galicia, without knowing whether we should be so happy as to arrive there, having reason to fear that Don Ambrosio at his return would pursue with a great number of people, and overtake us. Nevertheless, we continued our journey two days together without any opposition : we were in hopes that the third would pass in the same manner, and were discoursing very agreeably of this adventure, and of what happened to Don Alvar in his absence : how after he had been a slave five years, he had recovered his liberty, and what it was that occasioned the report of his death, when yesterday, on the road to Leon, we met those thieves who were with you. He is the person whom they killed, with all his attendants, and for whom I weep.

CHAP. 1

C H A P. XII.

In what a disagreeable Manner Gil Blas and the Lady were interrupted.

WHEN Donna Mencia had finished her story, she shed a torrent of tears, while I also wept at the sad relation. It is very natural to be interested for a person in distress, particularly a lady. I was about to enquire what she intended to do in this conjuncture, and probably she also intended to consult me on the same head, when a prodigious noise in the inn interrupted us, and drew our attention: the reason of this noise was the arrival of the corregidor, attended by two alguazils, and a lguard, who came into the room where we were, without any ceremony. A gentleman who was with them came up to me, and observing my dress attentively, exclaimed, By St. Jago! this is one of the thieves who conceal themselves in this country; he has my coat on; he has my horse also; apprehend him.

This conversation made me understand this was the person who had been robbed, and I unluckily in possession of his spoils. I was amazed and confounded; and my surprise made the corregidor imagine that I was the guilty person, and that it was possible the lady might be an accomplice: we were therefore ordered to separate prisons. This judge was not a stern one, whose looks affright a criminal to death; he was all

all tenderness : God knows whether he was the better for that. As soon as I was committed, he came to the prison, attended by his officers, who, according to custom, plundered me. I dare say I was the best booty they ever had; every time they put their hands into my pockets, the pistoles they brought out made their eyes sparkle with joy. The corregidor was quite transported, and mildly said, Do not be afraid; if you are innocent, no harm will happen to you, we only do our duty. With all their meekness, they emptied my pockets, and even took from me the forty ducats my uncle had given me; they stripped me to the very skin, to see if I had no money concealed about me. When they had thus dexterously done their duty, as they expressed it, I was examined by the corregidor, whom I ingenuously told all that had happened to me: he ordered my examination to be taken in writing, and then took himself away, with his attendants and my money, leaving me in the prison quite naked among straw.

When I found myself alone in this situation, I exclaimed, O what is life! how many disappointments do we meet with! mine has been a continued course of misfortunes, since I left Oviedo: I no sooner have escaped one danger, but another befalls me. When I came into this city, I little expected to be so well acquainted with the corregidor. While I was reflecting in this manner, I put on the fatal coat which my evil genius lent me, and determined to take courage. I said to myself, Come,

Gil

Gil Blas, shew thy resolution and fortitude; wilt thou despair in a prison, who hast had so severe a trial among thieves in a dark confinement? but alas! what reason have I to comfort myself, since they have deprived me of the means of making my escape? they have taken my money, and a prisoner without money is like a bird with its wings cut.

In place of the dinner I had ordered, they brought me some dry bread, and a mug of water, and left me to my own reflections. I did not see a human face for fifteen days except the jailor's, who gave me my spare diet every day. I would gladly have had a little conversation with him, but he avoided it; nay, sometimes would not condescend to look at me. The corregidor came in on the sixteenth day, and said, Young man, I bring thee agreeable news, thou mayest now rejoice; I have ordered the lady who was with thee, to be sent to Burgos; before she went, I had her examined, and her answers have acquitted thee: thou shalt be set at liberty this day, provided the muleteer, who, as thou sayest, brought thee from Penasler to Cacabelos, confirms what thou sayest; I will send for him from Astorga, where he now is, and if he agrees with thee in the affair of the torture, I will immediately discharge thee.

It gave me great pleasure to hear him talk in this manner, expecting my imprisonment was now at an end; I returned him thanks for his just and speedy decision, and had not quite finished my thanks, when the carrier came in, attended

ed by two soldiers. I immediately knew him; but the villain having disposed of my portmanteau, and all it contained, and being afraid of having to make satisfaction, if he confessed that he knew me, with amazing assurance declared, that he never saw me before. I exclaimed, Ah traitor, rather own that thou hast sold my effects, and tell the truth; look at me again, and recollect that I am the young man that you threatened with the torture at Cacabelos, and put into such a terror. The muleteer answered calmly, that I was mentioning an affair which he was quite ignorant of, and as he still persisted in denying the fact, my imprisonment was continued till further enquiry was made; so I was obliged to console myself again, and be contented with bread and water, and the sight of my old visitor the jailor. It was a wretched thing to be there without having committed any crime: I wished I had rather remained in the cavern: it was less disagreeable than in the prison, for in the cavern I was more at ease, and lived well with the robbers; we were merry, and I was in hopes of making my escape every day; instead of that, though I am now innocent, my best deliverance from hence may be to be sent to the galleys.

C H A P. XIII.

By what Accident Gil Blas was delivered from the Prison, and where he took his Course.

W H I L E I spent my hours in making these melancholy reflections, my adventures were publickly known all over the town; curiosity brought many people to see me, through a little window, which enlightened my prison, and after having looked at me, went away again. This surpris'd me, as it was not usual for me to see any body; from this I began to imagine that my story made some noise in town, but did not know whether to think it a good or bad sign.

One of the people who came to see me I knew to be the little ballad-singer of Mondonedo, who had been equally with me afraid of the rack, and fled to avoid it; we immediately knew each other, and fell into a discourse; I told him all my adventures, and he entertained me with what had pass'd at the inn at Cacabelos between the carrier and the new married wife, after we had been driven away in a fright; in short, he told me every thing I have related, and at parting promised that he would immediately set about getting my deliverance. Then every person who came to my little window after the ballad singer, promised to join him, being affected with my misfortunes; they said they would endeavour to set me at liberty.

Accordingly

Accordingly they kept their promise, and spoke to the corregidor in my behalf. After he heard the ballad-singer tell him all the affair, he no longer doubted my innocence; he came in three weeks to my prison, and said, Gil Blas, I will no longer keep thee in pain, thou mayest go where thou plearest; but tell me, if we were to send some people with thee to the wood where the subterranean retreat is, couldst thou find it out? I replied, that I could not possibly discover the spot, as I went in the night, and came out before it was light. Then the corregidor left me, saying, he would order the prison-doors to be opened for me to go. Soon after the jailor and his turnkey came, and took off the cloaths I had on, thinking them better than their own, put an old footman's frock on me and turned me out. My shame at the dress I was in lessened the joy which prisoners generally have when set at liberty.

I had a great inclination to leave the town directly, to avoid being looked at, which I could not bear; but I could not be so ungrateful as to go without taking leave of the ballad-singer, and giving him thanks for his favours. When he saw me, he could not refrain from smiling at the appearance I made. You have fared very poorly, said he, in the hands of justice. I do not reflect against justice, I replied, she is equitable; I only wish her officers were also just: they certainly should have left me my cloaths, I think my money was sufficient. I would have thought so too, replied the quainter, but they tell you
these

these things must be done; and how do they do this duty of theirs? do you imagine that your horse is given back to the person to whom it belonged? I assure you he is not, he is at present in the town clerk's stable, and I dare say the poor man will not get so much as the crupper again. But we have said enough of this; tell me what you are going to do. I intend to go to Burgos, answered I, and see if I can find the lady whom I delivered from the robbers, perhaps she will give me a little money to buy a new cassock, and then I shall go to Salamanca, where I will endeavour to make something of my Latin: my greatest concern is, that I am at a distance from Burgos, and have nothing to support me on the road. I understand you, said my friend, my purse is very low, but it is at your service as it is; and he genteelly gave it to me. I was as thankful as if he had given me a considerable sum, and promised him, if ever I had it in my power, I would do him a service, and so took leave of him. I did not go to see any other person who had assisted me, I only returned them thanks in my own mind.

I found my friend's purse low, but happily I had been accustomed to a very frugal diet for the last two months, else I could not have made it serve me; I husbanded it so well, that when I came to Ponte de Mula, which is but a small distance from Burgos, I had some reals left. Here I stopped to make some enquiry after Donna Mencia, and going to an inn, I was accosted by the landlady, a disagreeable insolent woman.

I soon discovered that she was not fond of my appearance; I paid no attention to her, but called for some bread and cheese. They also brought me some very bad wine. I was desirous to converse with my landlady: while I was eating, I enquired of her, if she knew the Marquis of Guardia; if his seat was near; and what she knew of the Marchioness his lady? She said with a scornful air, that I was very inquisitive, and told me in a rude manner, that Don Ambrosio's house was but a league from Ponte Mula.

When I had supped as well as I could afford, it grew late, and I desired to be shewn to my chamber. You a chamber! said the landlady scornfully: I have none for people who sup on bread and cheese. My beds are all taken up; I expect people of consequence to sup here to-night: you may sleep in the barn, if you chuse; I suppose it is not the first time. What she said was very true. I made no reply, but calmly went to the barn, where I slept as sound as a person who is heartily fatigued.



CHAP. XIV.

The Reception given by Donna Mencía to Gil Blas at Burgos.

I WAS not late of rising next morning, but I went to pay my hostess her bill; and she seemed more complaisant than she was the night before.

Before. This alteration in her behaviour I ascribed to the company of three soldiers who belonged to the holy brotherhood; they had been at the inn all night, and seemed to converse very familiarly with her: and these were undoubtedly the people of consequence for whom the beds were bespoke. When I came into the village, I enquired the way to Don Ambrosio's castle. I accidentally met with such a man as my landlord at Penafier, who did not only inform me of the road to the castle, but also told me, that Don Ambrosio died three weeks since, and that his wife the Marchioness had retired into a convent at Burgos; so instead of taking the way to the castle as I intended, I went with all the expedition I could to the convent where Donna Men-
cia lived. I desired the door-keeper to inform her that a young man just come from the prison of Astorga desired to see her. She was immediately informed, and the door-keeper returning, shewed me into a room, where I did not wait long before Don Ambrosio's widow made her appearance at the grate, in deep mourning. You are welcome, said the lady, it is but four days since I wrote to Astorga to a person there, to desire you to come here as soon as you were at liberty. I made no doubt but you would soon be released, as I said all I could in your behalf to the corregidor. I received for answer, that you were out of prison, but they did not know where you were gone. I was afraid I should not have the pleasure of seeing you, to express my gratitude. Do not be ashamed, said she, observing

I was out of countenance at making so mean an appearance, you need not be uneasy on account of that wretched dress. I should be the most ungrateful person in the world, if I did not do something for you, after being so much obliged to you. I will deliver you from the miserable state you are in: I am now in a situation capable of doing it, without any inconveniency to myself.

You know, added she, my history till the time of our imprisonment, and I will now inform you of what has happened to me since that time. When I was conducted by the corregidor's people to Burgos from Astorga, and after I had given a faithful account of my life, I went to Don Ambrosio's castle. My return amazed them greatly; I was informed that I came too late, for the Marquis, afflicted at my fright, had fallen sick, and his life was despaired of by his physicians. This was a fresh cause for me to complain of my hard fortune; however, I desired that notice might be given of my arrival, which they did; then I went to his bed-side with tears in my eyes, and my heart oppressed with grief: as soon as he perceived me, he exclaimed, What has brought you here? Is it not enough that you are the cause of my death, but you must also be witness of it? I replied, No, my Lord, Ines should have told you, that I went with my first husband, and you would never have seen me again, had not a dreadful accident happened to us. I acquainted him that Don Alvar had been killed by the robbers, and I afterwards was
taken

taken to a habitation under ground. I informed him of all that had happened to me there, and since that time. When I was done speaking, Don Ambrosio put out his hand, and said, with the greatest tenderness, It is enough, I shall complain no more: I cannot blame you for going with a husband whom you loved tenderly: I would not allow you to be pursued: I reflected on the sacred rights of your ravisher, and also your inclination for him. In short, I did you justice, and you have recalled my affections by your return. Indeed, my dear Mencia, your presence gives me great pleasure, but it will not be lasting; I find my last moments approaching: you are scarcely retired to my arms, but I must bid you an everlasting farewell. These affecting expressions made my tears flow abundantly, and my affliction was inexpressible. I even wept aloud; and I do not know whether the death of my adored Don Alvar gave me greater concern. Don Ambrosio's presage of his death was not a false one, for he expired the next day, and left me mistress of the large estate he settled upon me at marriage, which I shall not make a bad use of: and though I am but a young woman, the world shall not see me in the possession of a third husband. Nor do I think it would be delicate to marry thrice. I have taken a resolution to finish my days in a convent, and become a benefactress there.

When Donna Mencia had finished this conversation, she pulled out a purse, and gave it to me, telling me, that it contained a hundred

ducats, which she gave me to purchase cloaths, and after I had done so to come and see her again, as that would not be the whole of her gratitude. I returned the lady a thousand thanks, and declared I would not leave Burgos without seeing her. After this promise, which I had no intention to break, I went in search of an inn, and entered the first I came to. I asked for a room, and to prevent the landlord from having a bad opinion of me from the appearance I made, I told him I could very well afford to pay for my lodging. Upon which Majuelo, which was my landlord's name, viewed me attentively, and being a wag, replied, that he had no need of this assurance, to know that I would spend genteelly in his house; that he saw something noble in me, notwithstanding my disadvantageous dress, and made no doubt of my being a gentleman of fortune. I saw the rogue rallied me, and to put an end to his jesting, I shewed him my purse, and laid my hundred ducats on the table. I perceived that the sight of it gave him a more favourable opinion of me. I desired he would recommend a tailor to me; he advised me to have a broker, who could serve me with all sorts of cloaths instantly. I approved of his advice, and determined to follow it; but as it grew late, I deferred it till next morning, and ordered supper immediately, to make up for the bad living I had lately had since I left the cavern.

C H A P. XV.

Of Gil Blas's Dress. An Account of a second Present from the Lady, and in what Equipage he left Burgos.

TH E waiters brought me in a good fricassée of sheeps trotters to my supper, which I immediately devoured, and having drank plentifully, I went to bed, where I expected a sound repose, as I had a good bed, but really could not close my eyes, having my thoughts so much taken up with the dress I was to chuse. I did not know what to determine upon; sometimes I was for following my first intention of purchasing a cassock, and going to Salamanca, and of taking orders; but the world prevailed at last, and I determined to make my fortune in it; for which purpose I put on my sword, and dressed myself like a gentleman.

Having made this resolution, I waited impatiently for the morning, I arose as soon as it was light, and made such a noise, that I awaked all about me; I called up the waiters, who cursed me for it; they however were obliged to get up, and I insisted upon their bringing me a broker, which was immediately done; he was attended by two of his apprentices, each of whom carried a green bag. The broker accosted me very civilly, saying, Signior, you were very lucky in applying to me; not that I would undervalue my brethren in trade, or hurt their reputation in the least, but, quietly, there is none of them have any conscience; they are like

Jews : I am the only honest broker. I am satisfied with a reasonable profit. A shilling in the pound is all I desire: thank God, I love to deal honestly with every body.

After all this discourse, which I took for truth, I ordered the bundles to be opened, and was shewn suits of different colours, and some plain ones; but I rejected the latter with disdain, thinking them too mean. I was at last prevailed on to try a suit which appeared to fit me, though it had been wore a little, but it took my fancy; it was a doublet, with a cloak and pair of breeches, all of blue velvet, embroidered with gold. This took my fancy, which the broker observed, and commended my choice. I enquired the price of it. The broker cried, Upon my honour, you understand these things; I assure you this suit was made for one of the greatest lords of this kingdom, who did not wear it above three times. View the velvet, nothing can be finer, and the embroidery is delightfully done. What is the price? said I. He answered, sixty ducats: as I am an honest man, I have refused that sum. I told him I would give him forty five, which I looked upon as double the value. Signior, replied the broker with an air of indifference, I never ask too much, I am always at a word. Observe some of these suits, pointing to those which I had objected, I will sell them to you considerably cheaper. This was only to make me more desirous to have the one I had chosen, and it had the desired effect, for I immediatly told him down sixty

ty

ty ducats. And I believe, in spite of his pretended honesty, he wished he had asked more, when he found I was so easily brought to pay this; however, he was pretty well satisfied with his profits, and took his leave with his apprentices, whom I have not yet forgotten.

As I had now got a genteel suit of cloaths, I spent the remainder of the morning in providing other necessaries; I purchased linen, stockings, shoes, hat, and sword; and after having dressed myself, I was infinitely pleased; I was never tired of admiring myself; in short, no peacock ever took more pleasure in admiring his feathers. I went the same day to Donna Mencia, to pay her a second visit, who received me as graciously as before, and again returned me thanks for the service I had done her, and many compliments passed on both sides; after which, she gave me a ring, which was worth about thirty pistoles, desiring me to keep it for her sake. She then wished me all happiness, and withdrew. This present rather disappointed me, as I expected something more considerable; I returned to my lodging very thoughtful, and just as I entered my lodging, a man following me, opened his cloak, and discovered a large bag, that appeared like a bag of money, which I devoured with my eyes, as likewise did all present. I thought the man was an angel, when he said, Signior Gil Blas, here is a present the lady Marchioness has sent you, at the same time laying the bag upon the table: I made several profound bows to the bearer, whom I confounded with my civilities; and

as soon as he left my lodging, I flew at the bag of money like a hawk upon his prey, carried it to my room, opened it, and found it contained a thousand ducats. Just as I had done counting them my landlord, who heard what the messenger said to me, came in to see what was in the bag. Amazed at seeing so much money upon the table, Zounds! he exclaimed, what a large sum of money is here! you must know very well how to please the women; you have been only twenty-four hours in Burgos, and already have marchionesses under contributions.

I was not displeased with this conversation; I had an inclination to leave Majuelo in his mistake, which gave me a secret pleasure. I am not surpris'd that young men like to be thought in the good graces of the ladies. But my innocence was greater than my vanity; I informed my landlord of the truth, and acquainted him with the story of Donna Mencía, to which he gave great attention. I asked his advice in my present situation, as he appeared to be my friend. Having considered a while, he replied, Signior Gil Blas, I have a respect for you, and as you put so much confidence in me as to consult me in your affairs, I will tell you sincerely what I think will be most for your interest. You seem by nature intended for the court: I would have you repair thither, and get into the service of some great lord, and gain his confidence either in his interests or pleasures. If you do not do this, you lose your time. I know people of
quality

quality very well ; they pay no respect to the zeal and attachment of an honest man ; they only esteem such as are useful to them. You have likewise another resource : you are young and handsome, which, though you had no wit, is sufficient to gain some rich widow, or handsome young woman, who is unhappily married. Though love often ruins men of fortune, it makes those who have none. I would therefore advise you to go to Madrid ; but by all means have attendants : for people are looked upon according to the appearanace they make. I will recommend a faithful domestic to you, who is one of my own breeding. Purchase two mules, one for yourself and another for him, and depart with all expedition. His advice was very agreeable to my own taste ; and I therefore next day purchased a couple of handsome mules, and hired the domestic he had recommended : he was a man of about thirty years of age, and appeared a plain honest fellow. He told me he was a native of Galicia, and his name Ambrosio de Lamela. he did not appear covetous, he made no disputes about his wages, but would take whatever I thought proper. Having provided a portmanteau, and boots, I paid off my landlord, and set out from Burgos to Madrid very early next morning.

C H A P. XVI.

*Shewing that we ought not to think ourselves too
secure of Prosperity.*

THE first night we slept at Duenas, and the second day about four o'clock arrived at Valladolid. We went to an inn which appeared to be the best in the town. I left the care of my mules to my valet, and retired to my chamber, ordering one of the servants to bring up my portmanteau. Finding myself fatigued, I threw myself upon the bed, and fell asleep insensibly with my boots on: it was near midnight before I awoke, when I called for Ambrosio, who I found was gone out; but he soon returned. I called him to an account where he had been, and he replied, with a pious countenance, at church, to return thanks to God for having preserved us from all bad accidents on our journey. I approved of what he had done, and desired him to order a fowl to be made ready for my supper.

While I was speaking, my landlord came in with a taper in his hand, lighting a lady, who appeared to be more handsome than young; she was elegantly dressed, and her train was born by a black boy. She made me a low courtesy, and enquired, as if by chance, whether I was not Gil Blas of Santillane? to which I had no sooner replied, yes, than she left her attendant, and joyfully embraced me, which surprised me a
good

good deal. Heaven, cried she, what a happy meeting ! you are the person I was in search of. This reminded me of the parasite of Penafier, and was ready to think she was such another person ; but I was soon induced to think more favourably of her, when she said, I am cousin german to Donna Mencía of Moquera, who has been so much obliged to you ; I had a letter from her this morning, wherein she mentioned your going to Madrid, and begged I would treat you genteelly if you passed this way. I have been engaged these two hours in running up and down the city, making enquiry from inn to inn concerning all strangers that arrived, and when the landlord here described you, I supposed you were the person who had delivered my cousin. Now when I have met with you, I will let you see how sensible I am of the services you have done my family, particularly my dear cousin. I beg you will go to my house immediately ; you may be more conveniently lodged there than at an inn. I would gladly have excused myself by representing to the lady that it would be incommoding her family ; but in short, she would take no excuse. A coach waited at the door ; she was so obliging as to see my portmanteau taken care of herself, as she said there were many villains in Valladolid ; which I found too true. In short, I went with her and her valet into the coach, which mortified my landlord, he being disappointed of the money he expected I would spend in his house.

Our coach having gone through several streets,
stopped

stopped at a pretty large house. We were shewn into a genteel room, illuminated with thirty wax candles. Several servants were waiting, of whom the lady enquired, whether Don Raphael was yet arrived? they answered, No. She then told me she expected her brother from the villa they had near the town that evening, who would be agreeably surpris'd to find at his house a man who had done so much for the family. While she was saying this, we heard a noise below, which we found was occasioned by the arrival of Don Raphael, who soon made his appearance. He was a genteel young man, of a polite address. Brother, said the lady, I am glad you are come; you will help me to entertain Signior Gil Blas of Santillane, to whom we cannot be too grateful for his services to our relation Donna Mencía. There, said she, giving him a letter, you may read what she has written me. Don Raphael read aloud as follows.

DEAR CAMILLA,

SIGNIOR Gil Blas, who preserv'd my life and honour, has set out for court, and will undoubtedly pass through Valladolid: I intreat you, by our relationship, as well as friendship, to shew him all imaginable civilities, and keep him some time at your house. At Burgos.

Your affectionate cousin,

DONNA MENCIA.

How! exclaimed Don Raphael, when he had done reading the letter, and is this the person to whom

whom my cousin is indebted for her life and honour? Heaven be praised for this happy meeting. Saying this, he advanced, and clasping me in his arms, What pleasure it gives me to embrace Signior Gil Blas of Santillane! My cousin the Marchioness did not need to lay such injunctions upon us: she needed only to hint that you were to pass this way; my sister and I know our duty very well, and would behave genteelly to a person who has done so much service to the family. I made the best reply I could to these compliments paid to me, which were followed by more of the same nature, intermixed with a hundred caresses. After which they called a servant to take off my boots, observing I had them on still.

We retired into another room, where the cloth was laid for supper, to which we all sat down, and their conversation and behaviour was as obliging and attentive as before. I never spoke but they complimented me upon what I said, and were very assiduous in helping me out of every dish at table. Don Raphael frequently drank Donna Mencia's health, I did the same, and I perceived that Camilla gave me some significant looks sometimes, I likewise observed that she took opportunities of doing it when her brother would not perceive her. This was sufficient to make me imagine that I had captivated the lady, and I flattered myself that it might be for my advantage, while I stayed at Valladolid. These hopes made me readily comply with making my stay there longer. They returned me thanks for my complaisance, and the pleasure which

Camilla

Camilla shewed on the occasion, made me conclude that she saw something amiable in me.

Don Raphael seeing that I had determined to stay some time with him, proposed to take me to his castle. He gave me a magnificent description of it, and spoke of the pleasures he pretended we should find there. Sometimes, says he, we go a hunting, sometimes a fishing; and if you are fond of walking, we have fine woods and delightful gardens; besides, we shall have good company; I hope you will not be wearied there. I accepted of his proposal, and it was resolved that we should go the very next day to this delightful castle of his. We rose from table after having formed so agreeable a design, and Don Raphael appeared transported with joy, and embracing me, said, Signior Gil Blas, I leave you with my sister; I am going this instant to give the necessary orders, and invite those people whom I design shall be of the party. At these words he went out of the room, and I continued in conversation with his sister, who did not contradict by her discourse the sweet glances she had thrown on me; she took me by the hand, and looking at my ring, said, You have a pretty diamond enough, but it is a small one: are you acquainted with stones? I answered No: I am sorry for it, says she, for you might have told me what this is worth. At these words she let me see a large ruby which she had on her finger, and whilst I was viewing it, added, One of my uncles, who was governor of the Philippine islands, belonging

Belonging to the Spaniards, gave me this ruby. The jewellers of Valladolid value it at three hundred pistoles, I believe it, says I, I think it is a very fine one. I will exchange with you, replies she, since you like it. Immediately she took off my ring, and put her own on my little finger! After this exchange, which I thought a very gallant way of making a present, she squeezed my hand, and looked tenderly on me, then all on a sudden abruptly started from me, wishing me good night, and retired quite confused, as if she had been ashamed of discovering her sentiments to me.

Although I was a novice in gallantry, I perceived that her going away in such a hurry was in my favour; and thought that I would spend my time very agreeably in the country. Full of this flattering fancy, and the brilliant condition of my affairs, I locked myself in the chamber where I was to lie, after having told my servant to come and awake me early in the morning. In place of going to rest, I abandoned myself to the agreeable reflections which my portmanteau, that lay on the table, and my ruby inspired. I thank heaven, said I to myself, if I have been unfortunate, I am not so now. A thousand ducats on one side, on the other a ring worth three hundred pistoles; these will last me a good while. Majuelo, I see, has not flattered me: I shall inflame a thousand ladies at Madrid, since Camilla has been so easy a conquest for me. That generous lady's favours presented themselves to my imagination with
all

all their charms, and I tasted before hand the diversions which Don Raphael had prepared for us at his castle. Nevertheless, amongst so many pleasing images, sleep at last overtook me, and the day was pretty well spent when I awoke.

I was surpris'd at not seeing my servant appear, after the orders he received from me. Ambrose, says I to myself, my faithful Ambrose is either at church, or very lazy to-day. But this good opinion of him did not continue long; I soon conceived one much worse; for getting up, and not seeing my portmanteau, I suspected him of having robbed me in the night. To clear up my suspicion, I opened my chamber door, and called the hypocrite several times. Upon which an old man hearing me, came and said, What do you want, Signior? All your people went from my house before day. How! From your house, says I; am not I in Don Raphael's house? I do not know that there is such a man, says he, you are in furnished lodgings, and I am the landlord. Yesterday evening, an hour before you came here, the lady who supped with you came and took this apartment for a great lord, who travelled *incog.* and she even advanced the payment for them.

This was enough for me, I guessed the characters of Don Raphael and Camilla, and that my servant having made himself perfectly acquainted with my affairs, had sold me to these cheats. In place of imputing this sad incident to myself, and thinking that it would not have

have happened to me, if I had not been so foolish as to have discovered myself unnecessarily to Majuelo, I gave innocent fortune all the blame, and cursed my stars a hundred times. The master of the house, to whom I related the adventure, which very likely he knew as well as I did, appeared sensible of my grief. He pitied me, and said he was very sorry that such an affair had happened, in his house: but I believe, that notwithstanding his demonstrations, he was no less concerned in the trick than my landlord at Burgos, to whom I ascribed the honour of the invention.



C H A P. XVII.

What Gil Blas did after the Affair of the ready-furnished Lodging.

AFTER I had heartily deplored my misfortune, I reflected, that in place of yielding to sorrow, I should rather animate myself against mischance. I took heart, and said to myself, while I was dressing, It is well that the rascals have not carried off my cloaths, and some ducats which are yet in my purse. I gave them credit for this piece of discretion; they had even been generous enough to leave me my boots, which I gave to my landlord for one half of what they cost me. In short, I left the house, without bidding adieu to any body, having no occasion

occasion for any one to carry my baggage. The first thing I did, was to go and see if my mules were in the inn where I left them the preceding day. I guessed that Ambrose had not left them there, and I wished to God that I had always judged as rightly of him. I was informed that he had taken care to remove them that evening. Therefore expecting that I would never see either them or my portmanteau again, I walked in a melancholy manner in the streets, thinking what I should do. I was tempted to return to Burgos to have recourse again to Donna Mencía; but considering that this would be abusing this lady's goodness, and that I should pass for a fool, I gave over that intention. I swore that I would be upon my guard against women for the time to come, and would not trust even the chaste Susannah. I frequently threw my eyes upon the ring, and when I considered that it was a present of Camilla's, I sighed and said to myself, it certainly is no ruby, but I am acquainted with people who deal in them. I do not think that it is necessary for me to go to a jeweller to be persuaded that I am a fool.

However, I was willing to know the value of my ring, and shewed it to a lapidary, who rated it at three ducats. At this estimation though I was not amazed at it, I gave the governor of the Philippine islands niece to the devil. As I came out of the lapidary's house, I met with a young man, who stopt to view me. I did not recollect him at first, although I had been well acquainted with him formerly. How! Gil Blas, says he
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to me, do you feign to be ignorant who I am? Have two years altered so much the son of barber Nunnez, that you know not who I am? Do not you remember Fabricio, your countryman and school-fellow, with whom you have so often disputed at the house of Doctor Godinez, of universals and metaphysical degrees?

Before he had done speaking, I recollected him, and with a deal of joy embraced him. My dear friend, continued he, I am glad to see thee: I cannot express the joy which I feel. But, continues he, with an air of surprize, How comes it that you are dressed like a prince? a fine sword, silk stockings, an embroidered coat, and a velvet cloak? You must certainly have had great luck; I will hold a wager that some liberal old lady has given thee part of her fortune. Thou art deceived, says I, my affairs are not in so good a condition as thou thinkest. That sham will not take, says he; you pretend to be discreet. Monsieur Gil Blas, says he, tell me, if you please, where you got that fine ring which you have on your finger? I got it from an arrant jade, dear Fabricio, who, instead of enriching me with her favour, has made me a ridiculous dupe.

I uttered these last words in such a sorrowful manner, that Fabricio plainly saw, that they had put some trick on me, and urged me to inform him, why I complained so of the fair sex. Without any more to do, I satisfied his curiosity; but the story being long, and I not chusing to part with him so soon, we went into a public house,

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that we might be the more commodious. There we breakfasted, and I related to him every thing which had happened to me since my departure from Oviedo. My adventures seemed odd enough to him, and after having testified to me, that he very much sympathized with me in my present sad condition, he said, My child, we must comfort ourselves for all the misfortunes of life. When a man of sense is in trouble, he waits patiently for a more lucky time. A man, as Cicero says, should never suffer himself to be so much dejected, as to forget that he is a man. For my part, I am of that character, my misfortunes have not oppressed me. I am always above misfortunes. For example, I loved a girl of family at Oviedo, who had a regard for me; I asked her father's consent, and he refused me. On such an occasion, any other man would have died with grief; (admire the force of my genius) I run away with the dear creature. She was lively, blunt, and a coquet, and of consequence pleasure always determined her to the detriment of duty. I travelled six months with her up and down the kingdom of Galicia, from whence, as I had given her a taste for travelling, she would needs go to Portugal, and take a new companion with her. Here was another subject of despair; but I did not yet sink under the weight of this new misfortune, and, wiser than Menelaus, instead of taking arms against the Paris who had stole my Helen, I was glad that he had taken a plague from me, which I wanted to be rid off. After this, not caring to return again to the Asturias,

turias, that I might shun all discussion with justice, I proceeded to the kingdom of Leon, spending as I went, along the money I had left of what I had brought off with my pretty girl, for we had both of us a good deal when we left Oviedo. I had but a single ducat left, when I arrived at Palencia, which I was obliged to change for a pair of shoes: the remainder of it could not last long. My situation became very perplexing, I begun already to have a very scanty diet: there was no time to be lost. I therefore determined to go to service, and hired myself with a wholesale linen-draper, whose son was a great libertine. I found here an asylum against hunger, and at the same time a great embarrassment. The father ordered me to be a spy upon his son; the son begged of me to help him to cheat his father. What should I do? Why truly I preferred the son's desire to the father's command, and this preference cost me my leave. I entered afterwards into the service of an old painter, who through friendship taught me his art, but in teaching me almost starved me to death, which gave me a disgust against painting and Palencia. After this I came to Valladolid, and by great good luck, got into the family of one of the directors of the hospital, where I now live, and am very well pleased with my place. My master, Signior Manuel Ordonnez, is a very pious man; he walks always with his eyes fixed upon the ground, with a great rosary in his hand. It is said that from his infancy, he has had nothing in view, but relieving the poor,
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and has attached himself to them with an unwearied zeal. His cares also have not been without a reward; every thing that he does meets with success. What a blessing it is, that by managing the poor's affairs, he has made himself rich!

When Fabricio had ended his discourse, I said to him, I am very glad that thou art content with thy lot; but betwixt us two, methinks you may play a more agreeable part in the world. Thou art wrong, Gil Blas, answered he, there is no situation more agreeable than mine to a man of my humour. To be a lacquey is troublesome, I own, to some men, but a lad of spirit will find it full of pleasures. A superior genius that goes to service, never does his business so well as one of us merry fellows.

We enter into a family to command, rather than to serve: we begin with studying our master well, suit ourselves to his foibles, gain his confidence, and then lead him where we chuse. I have conducted myself thus with my steward. I perceived immediately that he wanted to pass for a saint, and feigned to be his dupe; that cost nothing. I did more, I copied after him, and acted the same part before him, that he did before others. I deceived the deceiver, and became by degrees his factotum. I hoped that I shall be able some day or other under his auspices, to acquire the care of the poor also. I will perhaps make my fortune too, for I find I have the same itch for riches as he has.

My dear Fabricio, says I, these are fine hopes,
and

and I compliment thee upon them : and for my own part, I will return to my first intention. I am going to turn my embroidered coat into a cassock, repair to Salamanca, list myself under the banner of the university, and perform the office of a tutor. A pretty project ! cries Fabricio ; an agreeable fancy ! wouldst thou be so foolish at thy age as to turn pedant ? Silly man ! Dost thou know what thou art going to do ? As soon as thou art placed there, all the college will observe thee, and all thy actions will be scrupulously examined : thou wilt be under continual constraint, must act the part of a hypocrite, and in appearance be possessed of all the virtues. Thou must be constantly reprovng thy scholar, and pass thy time in teaching him Latin, and in rebuking him when he says or does any thing that is not right ; and after so much trouble and constraint, what will be the fruit of thy cares ? If the little gentleman has not a good capacity, it will be said thou hast spoiled him, and his parents will turn thee away without any reward, perhaps even without paying thee what was agreed for. Do not talk to me then any more of a preceptor, commend me to a lacquey's post, which is worth ten of it. If your master has vices, a superior genius will turn them often to its own advantage. A valet lives without inquietude in a good family, eats and drinks till he is satisfied, and sleeps soundly, without perplexing himself about either baker or butcher.

Child, pursues he, I should never have done,

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were I to relate to thee all the advantages of valets. Believe me, Gil Blas, do as I do, and never think more of becoming a tutor. Yes, Fabricio, says I, but directors are not always to be found, and if I should turn valet, I would not chuse to have a bad place. You are right, says he; leave this affair to me; I will insure you of a good place, if it was for no other reason than to prevent a pretty fellow from throwing himself away at the university.

The poverty with which I was threatned, and the satisfied look which Fabricio had, persuaded me more than his arguments, and I resolved to go into some service. Whereupon leaving the tavern, my countryman said, I am going this instant to take you to a man to whom most of servants when out of place apply. He has spies who inform him of every thing that passes in families: he knows who are wanting valets, and keeps an exact register not only of places which are vacant, but also of the good and bad qualities of the masters. He has a brother a friar in a convent; and, in short, it was he who recommended me to this good place which I now have.

Whilst we were conversing about this register-office, Nunnez's son took me to a little house, where we found a man of about fifty years of age writing at a table. We saluted him with a great deal of respect, but whether he was naturally surly, or being accustomed with seeing nobody but servants, had contracted a custom of receiving people in that rude manner, he did not rise
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from his seat, but satisfied himself with nodding his head: he looked on me however with attention. I saw plainly that he was surprized to see a young man in an embroidered velvet coat wanting to become a valet: he had more reason to think that I came to ask for one: however, he did not doubt long of my intention, for Fabricio said to him, Signior Arias de Londonna, allow me to present to you one of my best friends; he is a lad of a good family, but misfortunes have reduced him to the necessity of serving: be so kind as provide him with a good place, and you may rely upon his gratitude. Gentlemen, replies Arias coldly, you all say so. You make the fairest promises in the world, before you have got a place, but when you are settled, you think no more of them. How then, replies Fabricio, do you complain of me? You might have done still better, says Arias; your place is as good as a clerk's in the treasury, and you paid me as if I had put you with an author. I thought it was now time for me to interpose, and I informed Signior Arias, that to let him see I was not ungrateful, I would give him my acknowledgment before-hand. At the same time taking two ducats out of my pocket, I put them into his hand, with a promise that I would not stop there, if I was well pleased.

He appeared very well satisfied with my behaviour, and said, that he loved to be used in that way. There are, continues he, some good posts vacant; I will read them over to you, and you may chuse for yourself. So saying, he put on

his spectacles, and opening a register, which was lying upon the table, turned over some leaves, and read as follows: Captain Torbellino wants a lacquey: he is a whimsical, passionate man, he swears constantly, and beats his servants so, that he lames them. That captain will not suit my taste, replies I, go on to another. Arias smiled at my vivacity and proceeded reading. Donna Manuela de Sandoval, a superannuated widow of an odd peevish temper, wants a valet; she commonly keeps but one, and him scarce for two days together. There is a livery coat in the house, which has served all her servants these ten years, let them be of what size soever, and it is as good as new yet, although above two thousand valets have worn it, for it may be said that they have only tried it on. Doctor Alvar Fannez, a physician and chymist, wants a valet; his servants are well fed, and he gives them good wages, but he makes a trial of his remedies on them, and there are often places vacant in this man's house.

You have shewn us a fine parcel of places indeed, says Fabricio interrupting him. Have a little patience, replies Arias de Londonna, we are not yet done, we shall soon come to some which will satisfy you: then he continued reading his register; Donna Alfonsa de Solis, who passes most of her time at church, and who will always have her valet near her; she has not had one these three weeks. The licentiate Sedillo, an old canon of the chapter of this city, turned away his valet last night. Halt there, Signior Arias

Arias de Londonna, says Fabricio, we will accept of this place. My master is related to the licentiate Sedillo, and I am perfectly acquainted with him : I know that he has for his housekeeper an old lady, called Dame Jacinta, who manages his household affairs for him. This is as good a family as any in Madrid, for a servant who wants to live well, and likes a quiet life. Besides, the canon is a feeble man, and much troubled with the gout, and certainly cannot live long ; so that his servant has a great chance for a legacy when he dies. A fine prospect for a valet, Gil Blas, says he, turning to me : friend, let us put off no time, we will immediately go to the licentiate's : I will present thee to him myself, and be answerable to him for thee. At these words, being afraid of losing so good an opportunity, we abruptly left Signior Arias, who assured me for my money, that if I should chance not to get this place, he would recommend me to one not much inferior.



THE
ADVENTURES
OF
GIL BLAS
DE SANTILLANE.

BOOK II.



CHAP. I.

*Fabricio takes Gil Blas to the Licentiate Sedillo's.
In what Condition they found the Canon. A
Portrait of his Housekeeper.*

WE ran all the way, so much afraid were we of being too long in arriving at the licentiate's. When we came to the house we found the door shut; we knocked; and had it opened by a girl of ten years of age, whom the housekeeper, in spite of scandal, passed for her niece:

niece: we asked if the canon could be spoke with. Dame Jacinta appeared: she was a person already arrived at the years of discretion; but still handsome, and had in particular a very fresh complexion. She was dressed in a long coarse stuff gown, with a leather girdle, to which hung on one side a bunch of keys, and a rosary of large beads on the other. As soon as we saw her we saluted her very respectfully, and she with a very modest and courteous air returned the same to us.

Being informed, says my companion, that the licentiate Signior Sedillo is wanting an honest lad to serve him, I come to present one to him; who I do not in the least doubt will please him. The housekeeper at these words fixing her eyes upon me, and thinking my embroidery was not very suitable with the discourse of Fabricio, asked, if it was I who wanted the vacant place? Yes, says the son of Nunnez; this young man, notwithstanding he appears so fine, has met with many misfortunes, which oblige him to go and work for his maintenance, but, adds he, with a genteel air, he will soon get the better of them, if he be so fortunate as to get into this family, and live with the chaste Jacinta, who is worthy of being housekeeper to the patriarch of the Indies. At these words the old jade took her eyes off me to view the polite person who spoke to her, and imagining that she knew him, said, I have a confused idea, that I have seen you before, pray, where was it? Chaste Jacinta, replies Fabricius, I am happy that you are pleased

to remember me; I have been twice here with my master Signior Manuel Ordonnez, steward of the hospital. It is so, says Jacinta, I remember it, and recollect your face: since you are with Signior Ordonnez, you must without doubt be an honest virtuous young man; your place recommends you, and this lad cannot have a better person to be answerable for him. Come in, added she, I will take you to speak with Signior Sedillo, who I should think would be very glad to have a youth of your recommending.

Accordingly we followed her to the canon's apartment, which was on the ground floor, and consisted of four little rooms: Jacinta desired that we might wait in the outermost while she went into the next where the licentiate was. After she had been some time with him, she came to tell us that we might enter. We perceived the old dotard in a large easy-chair, with his head upon a pillow, his arms on a cushion, and his feet on a stool. While we approached him we did not spare bows. Fabricio was still the spokesman, and not satisfied with what he had said to Jacinta, he extolled my merit highly, and in particular, enlarged upon the honour I had acquired with Dr. Godinez in disputes of philosophy, as if there was any occasion to be a great philosopher, to qualify one to be a canon's valet. Nevertheless, this fine panegyric which he bestowed on me, had a good effect on the licentiate, who besides perceiving that it was not disagreeable to his housekeeper, said to the
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son of Nunnez, Friend, I take the young man thou hast brought into my service; I am satisfied, and have a good opinion of his morals, since he is presented to me by Signior Ordonnez's domestic.

Fabricio, as soon as he perceived that I was hired, made a low bow to the canon, and another still lower to the housekeeper, and retired well contented with what he had done, after having whispered to me that we should see one another again, and that I had nothing to do, but to keep where I was. As soon as he was gone, the licentiate asked my name, the reason why I quitted my country, and by these questions, engaged me to relate my history in the presence of Jacinta: I diverted them both, and especially by the recital of my last adventure; I thought the old man would have killed himself with laughing at Don Raphael and Camilla's civility. He was seized with such a violent fit of coughing, that I thought he would have never come to himself again: he had not yet made his testament, so by that one may judge how the housekeeper was alarmed: he ran trembling to the good man's assistance, and did every thing that is done to children when they cough; rubbed his head, and clapped him on the back, which recovered him: This was however but a false alarm, the old man gave over coughing, and his housekeeper ceased tormenting him. I was going to conclude my story, but dame Jacinta, dreading another cough, was against it, and carried me out of the canon's chamber into the

wardrobe, where amongst several suits of cloaths, was the livery-coat which my predecessor had wore; she made me put it on, and hang mine in its place, which I was willing to preserve, hoping that it might still be of use to me; after which we went both of us to prepare dinner.

She found that I was no novice in the art of dressing victuals; it is true, I had served an apprenticeship under dame Leonarda, who might pass for a pretty good cook, though not to be compared with dame Jacinta, who perhaps was better than the archbishop of Toledo's: she excelled in every thing: her sauces were excellent, her jellies the same, her fricassees and hashes seasoned in such a manner, as made them very agreeable. When dinner was ready we returned into the canon's chamber, where while I laid the cloth near his easy-chair, Jacinta tucked a napkin under his chin, and fastened it about his shoulders. Immediately after I brought in some soup, which might have been presented to the most famous director in Madrid, and two ragouts that might have satisfied the sensuality of a viceroy, if Dame Jacinta had not been too sparing of her spices, for fear of provoking the licentiate's gout. My old master, who before seemed impotent in all his members, as soon as he saw these two dishes, let me see that he had not yet quite lost the power of his arms; he assisted himself in putting away his pillow and cushions, and briskly prepared himself for eating. Although his hand shook it did not refuse its service,

vice, it went and came free enough, but however in such a manner, that he lost one half of what he should have carried to his mouth, on his napkin and the table cloth. When he had done with the ragouts and soup, I took them away, and brought in a roasted partridge, flanked with two quails, which the housekeeper carved for him. She was also very officious in making him drink wine, a little diluted, in a large deep silver cup, which she held to his mouth as they do to a child fifteen months old: he fell fiercely on the ragouts, and made the same dispatch with the trotters: when he had eaten his belly full, Jacinta untied his napkin, and replaced his pillow and cushions, then leaving him in his easy-chair, to take that repose commonly attending a full stomach, we cleared the table and went to dinner in our turn.

Our canon dined in such a manner every day, he being perhaps the greatest eater in the whole chapter: indeed he did not eat so much at supper, as at dinner: a pullet and a dessert would satisfy him at night. I fared very well in this house, and had a pretty peaceable life; there was but one disagreeable thing, which was, being obliged to watch my master, and pass the night like a nurse: besides a retention of urine, which made him call ten times an hour for his chamber-pot, he was subject to sweat, and when that happened, I had to change him his shirt. Gil Blas, says he to me the second night, thou art a dextrous active youth, I foresee I shall be well pleased with thy service: I recommend to

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thee only to be complaisant to Dame Jacinta, she has served me with a particular zeal these fifteen years, and has taken so great care of my person, that I cannot enough acknowledge it; I must confess to thee also, that I like her better than all my relations; I have turned away my nephew, my own sister's son, because he paid no respect to her, for instead of doing justice to the sincere attachment she had for me, the rascal used her as a hypocrite; for at present, virtue appears like hypocrisy with such young fellows; thank God, I have got quit of the sad dog; I prefer those who have a regard for me, before all the ties of blood, and am swayed only by those that do me a kindness. You are certainly right, said I to the licentiate; gratitude ought to have more force with us than the laws of nature. Doubtless, replied he; and my testament will make it appear how little I regard my relations. My housekeeper comes in for a good share, and thou shalt not be forgot, if thou continuest as thou hast begun to serve me. The valet whom I turned away yesterday, lost a good legacy by his foolishness. If the scoundrel had not by his ill behaviour obliged me to give him his leave, I should have made his fortune, but he was a proud fellow, and did not pay respect enough to Jacinta; and so lazy that he would not give himself the least trouble. He forsooth did not love to wake with me; and thought it a great hardship to spend the nights in attending upon me. Ah! the rascal, cried I, as if the genius of Fabricio had inspired me, he merited not

to live with so honest a gentleman as you are. A lad that is so fortunate as to belong to you, ought to have an indefatigable zeal to please you. He should take a delight in his duty; and not think that he did too much, though he should sweat blood and water for you.

I perceived that the licentiate was evry well pleased with these words; nor was he less content with the assurance I had given him of being always resigned to the will of Dame Jacinta. Being resolved therefore to pass for a valet, whom fatigue could not discourage, I endeavoured to be easy, and went through my service with as good a grace as possible. I never complained of being up at nights; but I must own it was very disagreeable to me, and had it not been for the legacy which I fed my hopes with, I should soon have tired of my place. Indeed I rested some hours in the day time; and to do the housekeeper justice she was very good to me, which I attributed to the care I took in gaining her good graces by my complaisant and respectful manners. It I was at table with her and her niece Inesille, I changed their plates for them, filled out their wine, and served them in every thing with great attention; by which means I made them my friends. Whilst the housekeeper one day was going to market, finding myself alone with her niece, I began to talk with her, and asked her if her father and mother were still alive. No, says she, it is long since they died, so my good aunt tells me, for I never saw them.

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I believed what the wench said was true, though her answer was not so plain as it might have been, and put her into a such a humour of talking, that she told me more than I would have had her. She let me know, or rather I learned from her artless chat, that this good aunt of hers had a valuable friend who also lived with an old canon, whose temporalities he had the care of; and that these two happy domestics hoped to join the pillage of their masters by a marriage, the pleasures of which they had partaken of beforehand. I have already mentioned, that Jacinta, though somewhat superannuated, had not yet a bad complexion: it is true indeed, she took a great deal of pains to preserve it. Besides taking a glister every morning, she allowed herself excellent pills prepared for that purpose, during the day, and when she went to bed: she also slept soundly all night, while I watched my master: but, perhaps, that which contributed most of all to preserve her complexion, was an issue, which her niece told me she had in each leg.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

*How the Canon was treated when he fell sick: the
Consequence of it, and the Legacy which he left
Gil Blas.*

I H A D now been three months in the service of the licentiate Sedillo, and had never complained of the bad nights he made me pass with him, when he was seized with a fever; and the pain it gave him inflamed his gout. This was the first time in his life that he had recourse to a physician. He ordered Doctor Sangrado to be sent for, whom all Valladolid looked upon as another Hippocrates. Dame Jacinta would have been better pleased, if the canon had begun by settling his last will and codicil. She dropt some hints of it to him; but he did not imagine himself so near his end, and was in certain matters extremely obstinate. I went therefore for Doctor Sangrado, and brought him to our house. He was a meagre, pale man, and had been a practitioner forty years. This skillful physician had a very grave look; he weighed his discourse, and talked very eloquently. His reasoning appeared to be geometrical, and his opinions very singular.

After having observed my master, he said to him with a physical air, We must supply the defect of perspiration, which is stopped. Others in my place, no doubt, would prescribe salts and volatile medicaments, which are mostly made up
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of sulphur and mercury ; but purgatives and sordidifics are pernicious drugs. All chymical preparations are prejudicial. I, for my part, practise a method more simple and more sure. What diet have you accustomed yourself to ? I eat for the most part, answers the canon, soups and jellies. Soups and jellies ! cried the doctor surprised : I am not at all amazed that you are ill ; all such delicious meats are poisonous pleasures, snares that luxury lays for men, in order the more effectually to ruin them. It is necessary that you renounce such high food. The most insipid are the best for the health. As the blood is insipid, it requires such meat as partake most of its own nature. And do you drink wine ? added he. Yes, said the licentiate, wine mixed with water. The more water the better, replied the physician. How irregular you have been ! What a frightful regimen is this ! I am amazed to find you alive. What age may you be ? Sixty nine, says the licentiate. Just as I thought, replied the doctor : an early old age is always the fruit of intemperance. If you had drunk nothing but water all your life, and had been content with plain food, such as roasted apples, for example, you would not now have been tormented with the gout ; and all your limbs would have performed their functions with ease. However, I am not afraid of curing you, provided you do as I direct. The licentiate promised to obey him in every thing.

Then sangrado named a surgeon, and sent me for him, and made him take six pottingers of blood from my master, to begin to supply the defect

defect of perspiration. Then he said to the surgeon, Master Martin Onnez, come back again in three hours, and take away as much more, and do the same again to-morrow. It is a mistake to think that blood is necessary for the preservation of life. One cannot bleed a patient too much. As he is not obliged to perform any exercise or particular motion, he has nothing to do but to save himself from dying; he has no more occasion for blood for to live, than a man who is asleep: life in both consists but in the pulse and respiration. When the doctor had ordered frequent and copious bleedings, he said, that it was also necessary to be constantly giving the canon warm water to drink, assuring him that water drank in abundance was the real specific against all sorts of diseases. And when he went out, he said with an air of content to Dame Jacinta and me, that he would answer for the life of the patient, if we treated him in the manner which he had just prescribed. The housekeeper, who judged perhaps otherwise than him of the method, protested that it should be followed exactly. Accordingly we immediately made all possible dispatch to get water heated: and as the doctor had recommended to us above all things not to be too sparing of it, we made our matter drink two or three pints at each draught. We repeated the dose an hour after; and so every hour, till we had poured a deluge of water into his stomach. On the other hand, the surgeon seconded us by the quantity of blood which he took

took from him ; in less than two days we reduced the old canon to extremity.

The good man not being able to take any more, said to me with a weak voice, when I presented him with a large glass of the specific, Hold, Gil Blas, give me no more, my friend, I perceive that notwithstanding the virtue of the water I shall die ; and although I have scarce a drop of blood left, yet I am no better, which shews that the most skilful physician in the world cannot prolong our days, when their fatal period is come. Go bring me a notary, for I want to add a codicil to my will. Though I was not sorry to hear these last words, I affected to appear so ; and concealing the pleasure I took in acquitting myself of his commission, Sir, said I, you are not yet so bad, but that with heaven's help you may recover. No, no, my child, it is all over with me. I find the gout approaching nearer my vitals, and my time is come, therefore make haste, and do as I order you. Sure enough I perceived that he changed, and was approaching near his end, and the affair appeared so urgent, that I immediately went to do as he ordered me, leaving Dame Jacinta with him, who was more afraid than me that he should die without a will. I went into the house of the first notary I could hear of ; and finding him at home, Sir, said I, the licentiate Sedillo, my master, seemingly draws near his end, and wants his last will made : pray make haste, there is not a moment to be lost. The notary was a little brisk old man, and fond of raillery. He asked who was
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the licentiate's physician ; I answered Dr. Sangrado. As soon as he heard that name mentioned, he immediately took his cloak and hat, and said, Let us be gone, for that doctor is so expeditious, that he scarcely gives his patients time to call for a notary. That man has hindered me of a good many jobs.

As soon as he had said this, he made what haste he could to follow me ; and we went together to my master, not letting the grass grow under us, that we might arrive time enough for him to settle his affairs before he went out of the world. Sir, said I to the notary, you know that a dying man often loses his memory : now if my master should by chance forget me, I desire you will not fail to remind him of my industry. That I will, my boy, says the little notary ; you may rely upon me for that, I will advise him to leave thee something considerable, let him be ever so little disposed to reward thee for thy services. When we came into the canon's chamber he was still sensible. Dame Jacinta was with him, her face was bathed with tears which she had at her command, she had played her part, and prepared the good man not to forget her. We left the notary in the room with our master, she and I retired to the antichamber, where the surgeon came to us, whom the doctor had sent to give the canon a new and his last bleeding. But we would not suffer him to enter the room. Stop, Mr. Martin, says Jacinta to him, you cannot at present go into the canon's chamber, he is now busy with the notary, who is making his last will, and

and you shall not bleed him any more, till that is finished.

Jacinta and I were afraid lest our master should die before that was done. But thank God the deed, which caused our uneasiness, was executed. The notary finding me as he came out of our master's chamber, clapt me on the shoulder, and smiling said, Gil Blas, thou art not forgotten. I was very glad to hear it, and was so pleased with my master for remembering me, that I promised to pray for him after his death, which was not long of happening; for the surgeon having bled him again, the poor old man, who was but too weak before, died almost during the operation. The physician came in, as our master was breathing his last, and was a little startled, notwithstanding his long custom of dispatching his patients quickly. Nevertheless, instead of imputing the canon's death to the repeated draughts of hot water and bleedings, he said as he went away, That the patient had neither been bled, nor drunk water enough. The physician's executioner, I mean the surgeon, seeing also there was no more occasion for him, followed him.

As soon as our patron was dead, Dame Jacinta, Inesille, and I set up such a dismal noise, that it was heard all over the neighbourhood. The housekeeper especially, who had the greatest reason to rejoice, uttered such doleful accents, that she seemed the most afflicted person in the world. The chamber immediately was full of people, drawn thither more out of curiosity than compassion.

passion. As soon as the canon's relations heard he was dead, they poured into the house and sealed up every thing. They found the housekeeper so much afflicted, that they at first thought that the canon had not made his will: but they soon learned, that the testator had bequeathed his best effects to dame Jacinta and the little girl: they made a funeral oration, in terms not at all honourable to his memory. They pronounced an eulogium on Jacinta, and me also. I must confess that I deserved it in appearance; for the licentiate, rest the soul of him! in order to engage me to remember him as long as I lived, ordered an article to be inserted with regard to me, in this manner. Item, since Gil Blas is a young man who has already some learning, I leave him my library, my manuscripts. and books without exception.

I was quite ignorant where this pretended library was, as I never perceived any such thing in the house. I knew only that there was a few papers, and five or six volumes on a shelf in my master's closet; and that was all my legacy. Besides, the books could be of no service to me; one was entitled, The compleat cook, another A treatise on indigestion, and the method of curing it; and the others were, The four parts of the breviary, which the moths had almost destroyed. With respect to the manuscripts, the most curious contained some briefs and bills relating to a process, which the canon had formerly been engaged in, about his benefice. After having examined my legacy with more attention than
it

it merited, I abandoned them to his relations, who had envied me so much. I gave them back the coat I had of the licentiate, put on my own again, and only received my wages for the fruit of my services. I resolved to look out for another place. As for Dame Jacinta, besides the money which was left to her, by the help of her good friend, she found means to rob the licentiate of his most valuable effects, during his last illness.



C H A P. III.

Gil Blas engages himself in the Service of Doctor Sangrado, and becomes a celebrated Physician.

I DETERMINED to go and examine Signior Aurias de Londonna's register for a new place, but as I was just entering the Turn-Again-Alley, where he lodged, I met Doctor Sangrado, whom I had not seen since the death of my master, and took the freedom to salute him. Although I had altered my dress, yet he knew me at once; and said he was very glad to see me. My boy, says he, I was just thinking of thee; I have occasion for a good lad to serve me; and I think you will do very well, provided you can read and write. Sir, if that be all, I will answer your purpose. Very well, replies he, thou art my man then. Come with me, thou shalt have a very agreeable life, and I will treat thee with discretion: thou shalt have no wages; but thou shalt want for nothing. I will
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take care to keep thee genteelly, and teach thee the great science of curing all diseases. In short, thou shalt be my pupil more than my valet.

Expecting that so learned a master would make me a proficient in the art of physick, I accepted of his proposal. I went immediately home with him, to be installed in the employment which he destined me for; and this consisted in writing down the names and habitations of the patients that sent for him when he was from home. For that end he kept a register, wherein an old servant maid, whom he had for his domestic affairs, marked their addresses; but, besides her knowing nothing of orthography, she wrote so badly, that the doctor often could not decipher it. He committed the care of this book to me; which one might very justly call the register of the dead, as almost all the persons whose names I took, died soon after. I wrote down, as I may say, the people who were set out for the other world, as the clerk of a stage-coach-office marks down the names of those who take places. I had often my pen in my hand; for at that time there was not a more reputable physician in Valladolid than Doctor Sangrado. He imposed upon the public by a specious way of talking, and some fortunate cures, which had done him more honour than he merited.

He had abundance of practice, and consequently could not fail of growing rich. He did not consume it too profusely. We lived very sparingly, for the most part eating roasted apples, pease, beans, or cheese. He said those nutri-
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ments were most agreeable to the stomach, being the fittest for trituration, that is to say, easily bruised. In spite of this his opinion, however, he did not approve of our eating a belly full even of them, in which he certainly was in the right. But though he forbade the servant and me to eat much, to make amends, he allowed us to drink as much water as we thought proper. Instead of prescribing us bounds in that, he sometimes said, Drink, my children; health consists in the flexibility and humefaction of parts. Drink water liberally, it is an universal dissolvent. Water melts all the salts. Is the course of the blood flow? it precipitates it. If it be too rapid, it stops its violence. Though our doctor was pretty well advanced in years, yet he was so honest in that, that he drank nothing but water. He defined old age to be a natural consumption, which dried up and wasted us; and upon this determination, he bewailed the ignorance of those who called wine old men's milk. He supported that wine wasted and ruined them; and very eloquently said, that that liquor is to them as well as to all the world, a friend that betrays, and a pleasure that deludes.

Notwithstanding all these fine reasonings, I had not been in his house eight days, before I was seized with a flux, and a severe pain in my stomach, which I had the rashness to impute to the universal dissolvent, and bad living. I complained of it to my master, thinking he would relax, and give us a little wine at meals; but he was too great an enemy to that liquor to agree to

✓ to it. If you are disgusted at cold water, says he, there are innocent remedies to support the stomach against the insipidity of aqueous draughts; for instance, says he, balm, or sage, give it an agreeable taste; and if you will render it still more agreeable, you need only mix rosemary, wild poppy, or the flower of oeillet. Whatever he could say in praise of water, and whatever recipe's he would have given me to improve my beverages, I drank so moderately of it, that he perceiving me, said, I am not amazed, Gil Blas, that you have not good health; my boy, you don't drink enough. Water taken in small quantities only tends to lay open the bilious parts, and give them more activity; in place of which, we should drown them by copiously tempering them. Be not afraid of drinking often; I will warrant the issue of it, and if you find it not good for you, inform me. Celsus will be my surety; that Latin oracle has written an admirable encomium on water: he informs us in express terms, that those who on account of a weak stomach abstain from drinking water, do a great injustice to the stomachic powers, and make it only a screen for their sensuality.

I seemed persuaded that he was right, that I might not appear indocile when I was entering into the career of physic. I owned even that I was of his way of thinking; and would continue to drink water, on his and Celsus's guaranty; and though every day I found myself growing worse and worse, yet prepossession was too

hard for experience. I had, as may be seen, a great desire to become a physician. I could not however always resist the violence of my troubles, which encreased to such a degree that at last I resolved to leave Doctor Sangrado. But he gave me a new employment, which made me alter my mind. Hearken to me, my boy, says he one day to me, I am none of those severe and ungrateful masters, who suffer their servants to grow old in their service before they reward them. I am content with thy behaviour. I love thee, and, without expecting thou wilt be any longer my servant, I will make thy fortune. I will immediately discover to thee the mystery of the salutary art which I have professed for so many years. Other physicians make it consist in a thousand hard sciences: but I pretend to abridge so long a way, and spare thee the trouble of studying physic, botany, anatomy, and pharmacy. Know, my boy, that all there is occasion for, is bleeding and drinking plenty of hot water. This is the secret for curing all the distempers in the world: yes, this marvellous secret which I reveal to thee, and which nature, impenetrable to my brethren, has not been able to keep from my observations, is all comprehended in these two points, bleeding and often drinking water; I have nothing more to teach thee: thou art acquainted with the very bottom of physic, and, profiting by my long experience, thou becomest all at once as skilful as myself. Thou mayest, continues he, be assistant to me; thou shalt keep the register in the morning, and shall visit a part of
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of my patients in the afternoon: whilst I take care of the nobility and clergy, thou shalt attend the third order for me, and when thou hast done that for some time, I will get thee entered into the faculty. Gil Blas, you are a learned man before you be a physician; whereas others are physicians a long time, and most part of them all their lives, before they be learned.

I thanked the doctor for having so quickly made me capable of serving him as a substitute; and to acknowledge the goodness which he had for me, I assured him that I would follow his advice all my life, although it should be contrary to that of Hippocrates. This assurance of mine was not quite sincere: I disapproved of his opinion about the water, and determined to drink wine whenever I went to see my patients. I hung my coat upon a peg for the second time, put on one of my master's, and gave myself the air of a physician. After which I began to exercise physic at the expence of all those who sent for me. My first trial was upon an Alguazil, who was taken ill of a pleurisy. I made them bleed him without mercy, and give him plenty of warm water. After that, I was sent for to a pastry-cook, who was crying out with the gout; I was no more sparing of his blood than I had been of the Alguazil's, taking care also that he should have plenty of water. I got twelve reals for these prescriptions; which made me so enamoured with the profession, that I determined to pass the remainder of my days in taking blood from people, and filling them up with water. In

coming from the pastry cook's, I met Fabricio, whom I had not seen since the licentiate's death. He looked at me some minutes with surprise, and setting his hands in his sides, burst into an immoderate fit of laughter. Indeed he did not laugh without reason: I had a long cloak which trailed on the ground; my coat and breeches would have served a man four times as big as me; I might very well pass for an original figure. I let him have his laugh out, not without being tempted to follow his example; but I constrained myself in order to keep decorum in the street, and the better to counterfeit the physician, which is no risible animal. If my ridiculous air had excited the laughter of Fabricio, my serious one increased it, and when his laughing fit was over, Bless me, Gil Blas, thou art pleasantly equipped, who the devil has disguised thee in this manner? Softly, friend, says I, softly: learn to shew more respect to a new Hippocrates. Know that I am the substitute of Doctor Sangrado, who is the most celebrated physician in Valladolid, with whom I have been these three weeks. He has taught me physic from the very bottom; and as he was not able to attend all his patients himself, has hired me to assist him. He visits the great folks, and I the common sort. Very well, says Fabricio, that is to say, he reserves the blood of the great folks to himself, and leaves the blood of the common people to thee. I wish thee joy upon thy division; for it is better to have to do with common people than with the great. When a physician lives in the suburbs,
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his faults are less observed, and his murders not so much known. Yes, my boy, added he, thy condition appears to me worthy of being envied: and to speak like Alexander, I would wish to be Gil Blas, if I was not Fabricio.

That Fabricio might see that he was not in the wrong, when he boasted of the happiness of my present condition, I let him see the reals which the alguazil and pastry-cook had given me. Then we went into a tavern to spend some of them. They brought us some pretty good wine, at least it appeared so to me, for I had not for a long time tasted any. I drank great draughts of it, and, with all due respect to the Latin oracle, the more I poured into my stomach, the less did that organ complain of the injury it received. We staid a good while in the inn, and made ourselves merry at the expence of our masters, as the custom is amongst the valets. At last finding night approaching, we parted, after having mutually agreed to meet at the same place the next day after dinner.

CHAP. IV.

Gil Blas continues to exercise Physic with as much Success as Capacity. The Adventure of the Recovery of the Ring.

I WAS no sooner got home than Doctor Sanguado arrived. I informed him of the patients I had seen, and gave him the eight reals which remained out of the twelve that I had received for my prescriptions. Eight reals, said he to me, after he had counted them, this is a trifle for two visits, but we must take what we can get. So it appeared, for he kept six, and gave me the other two. Hold, Gil Blas, says he, there is something to begin a stock; I will give thee a fourth part of what thou bringest to me. My friend, thou wilt soon be rich, for if it please God there will be many patients this year.

I had reason to be satisfied with my share, as I designed always to keep a third part of what I received in the city, and afterwards have another quarter of what remained for him, which was a half of the whole, according to my arithmetic. This inspired me with a fresh zeal for my profession. The next day, as soon as we had dined, I resumed my physical dress, and went about my business. I visited many patients, whom I had registered, and treated them all in the same manner, though they had various distempers. Things had hitherto gone on without

out making any noise, and nobody; thank heaven, had as yet found fault with my prescriptions; but however excellent a physician may be, yet he cannot escape being censured. I came at last to a grocer's, whose son was dropsical. There I met with a little swarthy doctor, called Cuchillo, whom a relation of the grocer's had just brought. I bowed very low to all that were present, and particularly to the person who I judged was called upon to consult with me on the disease of the patient. He saluted me with a grave air, then looking very attentively at me for some time, Signior Doctor, says he to me; I beg you may excuse my curiosity; I thought I had known all my brethren the physicians in Valladolid, but must confess that I have not seen you before. You cannot have practised long in this city. I answered, that I was a young practitioner, and only prescribed as yet under the auspices of Doctor Sangrado. I congratulate you, says he politely, upon having embraced so great a man's method. I do not doubt but that you are already very skilful, though you seem to be young. He said this in so natural a manner, that I was uncertain whether he spoke seriously or bantered me. I was thinking what reply to make to him, when we were interrupted by the grocer, saying, Gentlemen, I am persuaded that you are both perfect masters of the art of physic, pray therefore examine my son's disease, and order what you judge most proper for his cure.

Upon this the little doctor made his observa-

tions on the patient, and after having observed the symptoms of the distemper, asked me in what manner I thought we should treat him. I am of opinion, replied I, that he should be bled every day, and made to drink plenty of warm water. The little doctor at these words smiled on me with a satirical grin, and said, Do you think that these remedies will save his life? No doubt of it, said I with a resolute tone, they must produce that effect, being, as Doctor Sangrado observes, specifics against all kinds of diseases. Then Celsus was very much to blame, answered he, when he assured us, that the manner to cure a dropsy was to make the patient abstain from eating and drinking. Celsus is not my oracle, said I; he is wrong as well as others, and I sometimes go quite contrary to his opinion. I perceive, says Cuchillo, by what you say, the sure and satisfactory method that Doctor Sangrado insinuates to young practitioners. The whole of his practice consists in bleeding and drinking of water. I am not at all amazed that so many honest people die in his hands. None of your invectives, said I hastily; it does not become a man of your profession to cast such reflexions. Mr. Doctor, I must inform you that many have been sent into the other world for want of bleeding and drinking hot water, and you have perhaps yourself experienced it as much as any other. If you have any thing to say against Doctor Sangrado, commit it to writing; he will answer you, and we will see on what side the laughs will be. By
St.

St. James and St. Dennis, says he in a passion, you do not know me : Sir, I can bite and scratch as well as any man. I am not afraid of Doctor Sangrado, who, notwithstanding his vanity and presumption, is a mere ninny. The figure of the little physician made me despise his passion; I replied to him sharply, and he returned it in the same manner, and immediately we came to fifty-cuffs. We had time to give one another some blows, and pluck out a handful of hair, before the grocer and his relations could separate us ; which when they had done, they paid me for my visit, and retained my antagonist, who appeared to them to be more skilful than me.

After this adventure, just such another had like to have happened : for going to visit a fat quirister, who was ill of a fever, as soon as he heard me mention hot water, he fell into a passion at the specific, and cursed me for my prescription. He called me a thousand names, and even threatned to throw me out of the window. I went quicker out of the house than I came in, and as I had no intention of visiting any more patients that day, I betook myself to the place which Fabricio and I had fixed on for our meeting. He was already there, and as we were both in a drinking humour, we soon got merry, in which condition we went home to our matters. Signior Sangrado did not perceive my being drunk, because I recounted to him the story of my quarrel with Cuchillo with so much action, that he took my vivacity for an effect of emotion.

which had remained with me since our combat. Besides, he became himself a party, as he was chiefly concerned in the affair; and being piqued against the little doctor, said, Gil Blas, thou hast done well to defend the honour of our remedies against that little abortion of the faculty. He pretends that water should not be given to people in the dropsy, I suppose! Stupid fellow! I will maintain that it is very proper. Yes, water, continues he, will cure dropsies of all sorts, likewise the rheumatism and jaundice. It is also very good in those fevers where the patient is cold and warm at the same time. It is wonderful even in those diseases that are imputed to cold serous phlegmatic humours. This opinion may appear odd to such young physicians as Cuchillo; but it is easily supported in good medicine, and if such as he were capable of disputing like philosophers, in place of decrying me, they would become my most zealous partizans.

He was in such a passion that he did not suspect that I had been drinking; for in order to exasperate him the more against Cuchillo, I had thrown in some circumstances of my own invention into the story. Nevertheless, full as he was with what I had told him, he did not fail to perceive that I drank more water than I used to do that evening, the wine having made me very thirsty; but he imagined that I was grown fond of his aquatics. What is this I see, Gil Blas, says he, to me smiling, I think you have now no longer a distaste against water. Thank God, thou

thou now drinkest it like nectar. My friend, this does not surprize me:—I knew very well that thou wouldst accustom thyself to be fond of it. Sir, says I, every thing has its time; I would at this moment give a gallon of wine for a pint of water. The doctor was so pleased with this answer, that he would not lose so good an opportunity of enlarging upon the excellence of water: he undertook to make a new eulogium on it, not like a cold orator, but an enthusiast. The taverns in days of old were ten thousand times more estimable and more innocent than they are at this present time. People in former times did not meet to spend their estates and ruin their constitutions by gorging themselves with wine, but they assembled to amuse themselves with a harmless conversation, and with drinking of warm water. We cannot enough admire the foresight of those masters of civil life, who erected public places where water was given to all comers. Wine was then secured in apothecaries' shops, only allowing it to be used by those who had the prescription of the physician. What wonderful sagacity! it is, no doubt, added he, owing to a happy remain of that ancient frugality, worthy of the golden age, that there are still some who drink warm water unboiled like thee and I, who believe they preserve themselves from and cure all disorders: for I have observed that boiled water is less agreeable and more heavy to the stomach.

Whilst he was talking so eloquently, I could

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scarcely

scarcely forbear laughing; however, I kept my gravity as well as possible; nay, I even entered into the sentiments of the doctor. I blamed the use of wine, and lamented the condition of those people who unhappily were fond of so pernicious a liquor. As my thirst was not yet sufficiently quenched, I filled a huge cup with water, and after having drunk again of it, Come, Sir, said I to my master, let us take a large draught of this beneficial liquor. Let us revive in our house the frugality and wisdom of the ancients, which you regret so much. He applauded my zeal, and exhorted me during a whole hour to drink nothing but water. To accustom myself to it, I promised him that I would drink a large quantity of it every evening; and that I might the more easily keep my promise, I went to bed with a resolution of going to the public house every day.

The disagreement I had with the grocer did not prevent me the next day from prescribing bleeding and warm water. As I was coming from visiting a poet who had the phrenzy, I met an old woman in the street, who accosting me, asked if I was a physician. I answered her that I was. Then, says she, I most humbly entreat you to come along with me. My niece was taken ill yesterday and I am ignorant of her ailment. I followed the old woman, who conducted me to a house, and introduced me into a chamber pretty well furnished, where I found a woman in bed. I approached near her to view her, and was immediately struck with her features,

tures, which when I had examined a short time, I was certain that it was Camilla, who before had played her part so well with me. As for her, she did not remember me, either with being so much oppressed with her disorder, or my physical dress having made such an alteration in my looks. I took hold of her hand, in order to feel her pulse, and perceived my ring upon her finger. I was glad to see a treasure which I had so much right to seize, and had a great desire immediately to make an effort to retake it, but thinking that these women might make a noise, and Don Raphael or some other defender of the fair sex come to their assistance, I took care not to yield to the temptation, and thought it would be better to dissemble, and take Fabricio's advice thereupon. I determined upon this last resolution. In the mean time the old woman urged me to inform her about her niece's disorder. I was not fool enough to confess that I did not know, but, on the contrary, affecting to be capable of it, said gravely, in imitation of my master Signior Sangrado, that the patient's illness was owing to a want of perspiration; that she must be immediately bled, evacuation being the only substitute of transpiration. I also prescribed her warm water, doing every thing according to our rules.

Having greatly shortened my visit, I went away to find Fabricio, whom I met at the door, going on an errand for his master. I related to him my new adventure, and asked him if he thought

thought it proper that I should cause Camilla to be apprehended by the magistrates. No, says he, by no means, that will not be the way to recover thy ring again. Those sort of people hate to make restitutions. Do you remember the prison of Astorga, what became of your horse, cloaths, and money? Did they not keep all? We must rather make use of our own industry to get thy diamond again. I will contrive some stratagem for that purpose, and will consider of it in my way to the hospital, where I have a short message to the purveyor from my master. Go to the tavern, and be not impatient, for in a very short time I will meet you there.

However, I had waited three hours at the rendezvous before he came. He was so disguised that I did not know him at first; for besides changing his habit, and tying up his hair, half of his face was covered with a false mustacio. He had provided himself with a great sword, the hilt of which was at least three feet in circumference, and marched at the head of five men, wearing also rapiers and thick mustachios, and seemed as resolute as himself. Signior Gil Blas, your servant, says he accosting me; you see an alguazil of a new make, and these brave people who accompany me are serjeants of the same stamp: take us to the woman who has stolen your diamond, and be assured that we will presently make her restore it. At this discourse I embraced Fabricio, who informed me of the stratagem he intended to use for me, and assured him

him that I approved highly of the expedient which he had contrived to put in execution for me. I also saluted the counterfeit serjeants, who were two barber's boys, and three valets of his acquaintance, whom he had engaged for that purpose. I ordered wine to be brought, that the brigade might drink, and we went all together immediately to Camilla's, where we arrived just about twilight. We knocked at the door, which we found shut: the old woman came to open it, and taking my attendants for officers, who never came there without a cause, was greatly affrighted. Do not be afraid, good mother, says Fabricio to her, we are only come here about a small affair, which will soon be determined. At these words we advanced, and entered the sick person's chamber, conducted by the old woman, who walked before us, lighting us along with a candle in a silver candlestick. I took the candle in my hand, and went to the bed side, and letting Camilla see my face, said, Treacherous woman, behold the too credulous Gil Blas, whom you have cheated. Ah! wretch, have I met with you at last? The corregidor has received my complaint, and has ordered this alguazil to arrest you. Come, Mr. Officer, says I to Fabricio, do your duty. There is no occasion, answered he, raising his voice, to put me in mind of doing that. I will take hold of that creature there. I have had her name down in my memorandum-book with red letters. Rise, Madam, added he, make haste to put on your cloaths; I will serve you as an usher, and conduct

conduct you to the city jail, if it be agreeable to you.

Camilla, sick as she was, as soon as she heard these words, and perceived that the two sergeants with great whisks were preparing to take her out of bed by force, raised herself up, clasping her hands in a suppliant manner, and looking at me with terror described in her countenance, Signior Gil Blas, said she, have compassion on me, I intreat you by the chaste mother to whom you owe your birth. Although I am very culpable, I am yet more unhappy. I will restore you your ring, therefore do not ruin me. After she had thus spoke, she took the ring off her finger, and gave it to me. But I answered, that I would not be content with my ring alone, that she must also restore me the thousand ducats which she had stolen from me in my furnished lodging. Oh! Signior, said she, do not demand them of me; the traitor Don Raphael took them away that very night, and I have never seen him since. My little darling, said Fabricio, dost thou think a bare pretence that thou hast not the spoil is sufficient to clear thee? You will not get off so, I assure you. It is sufficient as you are one of Don Raphael's accomplices, that you give an account of your past life. You have, no doubt, many things on your conscience; you will please therefore to come to prison, and there make a general confession. I will also take there, continued he, this good old woman, for I judge that she knows a number of curious stories, which

Monfieur

Monſieur the corregidor will not be ſorry to hear.

The two women at theſe words did what they could to ſoften us; they filled the chamber with cries and lamentations. While the old woman was on her knees, one while before the alguazil, and another before his attendants, endeavouring to move their compaſſion, Camilla, in the moſt affectionate manner, begged me to ſave her from the hands of Juſtice. I feigned to relent. Mr. Officer, ſaid I to the ſon of Nunnez, I am content, ſince I have got my ring. I do not deſire that you ſhould put this woman to any further trouble, and would not be the death of a ſinner. Do not tell me of your humanity, replied he, I have ſomething elſe to think of; I muſt acquit myſelf of my commiſſion. I was expreſſly ordered to apprehend theſe wretches, for Monſieur the corregidor wants to make examples of them. For heaven's ſake, ſays I, have ſome regard to my prayer, and relax yourſelf a little in your duty in favour of the preſent which theſe ladies will offer you. Oh! that is another affair, ſaid he; that is a figure of rhetoric which is well placed. Come, let us ſee what they will give me. I have, ſays Camilla, a pearl necklace, and two ear-rings worth a good deal. Yes, but, ſaid he interrupting her, if they come from the Philippine iſlands, I will have nothing to do with them. You may be certain they are right, ſaid ſhe, I warrant they are genuine. At the ſame time ſhe deſired the old woman to bring a little box, out of which ſhe took the necklace and ear-rings,

rings, and gave them both to the alguazil. Although he was not a better judge of rubies than myself, he did not in the least doubt but that the diamonds which the ear-rings were made of were genuine, as well as the pearls of the necklace. After having considered them attentively, he said, They appear pretty good, and if you will add the silver candlestick which Gil Blas has in his hand, I will not answer for my fidelity. I do not think, said I to Camilla, that you will break off so advantageous an accommodation for a trifle. As soon as I had pronounced these words, I took the candle out, and delivered the candlestick to Fabricio, who being contented with what he had got, perhaps because he did not perceive any thing more in the room which could easily be carried off, said to the women, Farewel, be easy, I will speak to the corregidor, and represent you to him whiter than snow. We know how to turn things as we chuse, and never make faithful reports, but when we are under no temptation to make false ones.



CHAP. V.

The Conclusion of the Recovery of the Ring. Gil Blas abandons Physic, and goes from Valladolid.

FABRICIO's project being thus executed, we left Camilla's house, applauding ourselves for the success, which was beyond our expectation,

pectation, for we reckoned upon nothing but the ring. However, we took the rest as we could get it, and instead of making a scruple of having robbed the courtezans, we thought we had done a meritorious action. When we had got into the street, Fabricio says to us, Gentlemen, I am of opinion that the best thing is to go back to the tavern, and be jovial all night. To-morrow we will dispose of the ear-rings, necklace, and candlestick, and divide the money amongst us like brothers, after which each of us shall return home, and make as good an excuse as possible to our masters. The alguazil's proposal appeared to be very judicious to us: we returned to the tavern, some thinking that they could easily contrive an excuse for being out all night, and others not caring whether their masters turned them off or not.

We made them get ready a good supper, and sat down with as much appetite as good humour. We were very agreeable all the while, and particularly Fabricio, who knew how to keep up conversation, and entertained the whole company. I here escaped him innumerable strokes of Castilian wit, equal to the ancient Attic. But while we were in the midst of our mirth, all on a sudden our joy was disturbed by an unforeseen event. While we were at supper, a man of a pretty good appearance entered the room, attended by two others of a very bad aspect. After these three others appeared, and we reckoned no less than twelve who entered in this manner, armed with carbines, swords, and bayonets.

bayonets. We soon saw that they were the watch, and it was not difficult to guess what they were come about. We had a design at first to resist, but they instantly surrounded us, and kept us in awe, as well in respect to their number as fire-arms. Gentlemen, says the commander of them with a bantering air, I know by what an ingenious artifice you have lately taken a ring from a certain the-adventurer: it was excellently done, and deserves a public recompense, which you will no doubt meet with. Justice, who has provided a lodging for you in her own house, will not fail to recompense you for such a fine effort of genius. All those to whom this discourse was addressed were very much disconcerted. We changed colour, and were possessed in our turn with the same fear with which we had inspired Camilla. Fabricio however, although he looked pale and dismayed, wanted to justify what we had done. Signior, said he, we had no bad intention, and consequently ought to be pardoned for this little trick. What the devil! replied the captain in a passion, do you call this a little trick? Do not you know that it is a hanging affair? For besides that it is not allowed to any one to take justice for himself, you have carried off a necklace, candlestick, and diamond earrings, which were not your own; and what is still worse, in order to accomplish the robbery, you disguised yourselves like serjeants. Knaves! to appear like honest men to do mischief. I shall think you very happy, if you get off without being hanged. When he had made us understand

derstand that it was a more serious affair than we imagined it to be, we fell at his feet, and begged him to have compassion on our youth; but he would not regard our intreaties. He rejected the proposal we made to give him the earrings, candlestick, and necklace. He even would not accept of my ring, perhaps because it was offered in company. In short, he was quite inexorable; he made my companions be disarmed, and carried us all to the city jail. As they were conducting us thither, one of his sergeants informed me that the old woman who lived with Camilla, having suspected us not to be the real officers belonging to the court of justice, had followed us to the tavern, and her suspicions being there confirmed, in order to be revenged of us, she informed the captain of the watch of the whole affair.

They immediately stript us of every thing, and the ear-rings, candlestick, and necklace went among the rest. They took from me also my ring, together with the ruby of the Philippine islands, which I unluckily had in my pocket. Nay, they did not so much as leave me the reals which I had received that day by my prescriptions: which proved to me that the officers of justice at Valladolid were as expert in their office as those at Astorga, and that the behaviour of these gentlemen was pretty uniform. Whilst they stripped me of my money and jewels, the officer of the watch related our adventure to the magistrates; and the affair appeared to them so extraordinary, that the generality of them thought

we

we deserved the most severe punishment. Others more tender-hearted, imagined that we might come off for two hundred lashes, and a few years service at sea. We were locked up in a dungeon, until the corregidor should think proper to decide our affair. We lay there upon straw, which was not so well strewed as that in a stable in which horses are littered. We might have staid there long enough, and never have come out but to have gone to the galleys, if Signior Manuel Ordonez had not heard our affair mentioned, and determined to get Fabricio out of prison, which he could not do without obtaining an enlargement for us all. He was a man greatly esteemed in the city, and was not sparing of solicitations; what by his own credit, and that of his friends, he set us at liberty at the end of three days. But we did not come out of the place as we entered; the candlestick, earrings, necklace, and ruby were all detained there. This made me remember those verses of Virgil which begin with *Sic vos non vobis*, &c.

As soon as we were at liberty we went back to our masters. I was kindly received by doctor Sangrado. My poor Gil Blas, says he to me, I did not hear of thy disgrace before this morning, and was just going to solicit vigorously for thee. Thou must comfort thyself for this accident, my friend, and attach thyself more than ever to physic. I answered that I designed to do so, and indeed I thought of nothing else. Instead of our business being slack, it happened, as
my

my master had so happily foretold, that he had abundance of patients, owing to the small-pox and putrid fever reigning in the city and suburbs. All the physicians in Valladolid had plenty of practice, and we in particular. We visited each of us eight or ten patients every day: consequently there was a great deal of blood taken, and much water drank. But I cannot tell how it happened, they all died; their distempers were either incurable, or we treated them very badly. We seldom visited the same patient thrice. At the second we learned that he was either going to be buried, or was just a dying. As I was but a young physician, and not enough hardened for murders, I was afflicted at so many events, which might be imputed to me. Sir, said I one day to Doctor Sangrado, I take heaven to witness that I have exactly followed your method, and yet all my patients die. One would imagine that they took pleasure in dying to discredit our practice; I met two this afternoon carrying to the grave. Child, says he, I could tell thee almost the same thing. I have not often the satisfaction of curing the people who fall into my hands, and if I was not very certain of the principles which I follow, I would think that my remedies were contrary to almost all the diseases which I have treated. If you will take my advice, Sir, said I, we will alter our method, and give our patients some chymical preparations out of curiosity. The worst that can happen is that they will produce the same effect as our bleedings and hot water. I would willingly make a
trial,

trial, says he, if it would not produce a bad consequence; but I have published a book, wherein I have boasted of the frequent bleeding and drinking of hot water, and you would not certainly have me decry my own work. You are in the right, said I, you must not give your enemies an opportunity to triumph over you. They will say that you have allowed yourself to be undeceived. They will ruin your reputation, therefore rather let the people, nobility and clergy perish, and we will go on in our old custom. After all, notwithstanding the aversion which our brethren have for bleeding, they perform no greater miracles than we, and I think their drugs are little better than our specifics.

We therefore continued our old practice, and proceeded in it, in such a manner, that in less than six weeks we made as many orphans and widows as the siege of Troy. There was such a number of funerals, that one would have imagined the plague was in Valladolid. Fathers were continually coming to our house, demanding an account of their sons whom we had robbed them of, or uncles to upbraid us with their nephews' deaths. As for the sons and nephews whose fathers and uncles fared the worse for our medicines, they never appeared to complain. The husbands were also very discreet, they did not come to scold us for the loss of their wives. The afflicted persons whose reproaches it was necessary to bear were sometimes very outrageous in their grief, and called us blockheads and assassins.

fallins. They did not spare me in particular. I was moved with their epithets; but my master, who had been accustomed to it, was not at all out of humour. I might perhaps in time have used myself to them as well as he, if heavē, doubtless to take away one of the most severe scourges of the sick people at Valladolid, had not given me a disgust to physic, which I practised so unsuccessfully.

There happened to be a tennis-court near our house, where the idle people in the city daily assembled, and among the rest was one who set up for judge and bully of the place. He was of Biscay, and his name Don Rodriguez de Mondragon. He appeared to be about thirty, not very tall, but lean, sparkling and strong; besides two small eyes, which rolled in his head, and threatened every body he looked at; a flat nose, which hung over a red mustachio, that curled to his very temples; he had such a rough and passionate way of speaking, that he frightened every body. This bully had made himself tyrant of the tennis-court. He judged imperiously of all the disputes that happened amongst the players, and there was no appealing from his judgment, unless one wanted to run the risk of a challenge. Such a one as I have just described was this Signior Don Rodriguez, who, notwithstanding he put a Don to his name, was no better than a butcher, who had gained the affection of the mistress of the tennis-court. She was a widow about forty years of age, rich, and pretty agreeable. Her husband had been dead about fifteen

months. I cannot think how she could be fond of this bully, certainly it could not be for his beauty; she must have seen something in him which nobody else did. Be it as it well, she had a passion for him, and determined to marry him. But in the time that she was preparing to consummate that affair, she fell ill, and unhappily for her I became her physician. If her disorder had not been a malignant fever, my prescriptions were sufficient to make it one, so that I filled the tennis court with mourning in four days. The mistress of it went the same way I sent all my patients, and her relations took possession of her estate. Don Rodriguez, in despair for the loss of his mistress, or rather in the expectation of so advantageous a match, did not content himself with throwing his fire and flames at me, but swore, that as soon as he met with me, he would run me through the body. A charitable neighbour informed me of his oath, and advised me not to go from home, for fear of meeting with this devilish man. This advice, although I had no desire to neglect it, filled me with trouble and fear; I continually imagined that I saw the furious Biscayen enter our house, and could not be a moment at rest. This gave me a distaste against physic, and I thought of nothing but freeing myself of my uneasiness. I put on my embroidered coat again, and after having bid adieu to my master, who could not retain me, I departed from the city at the break of day, not without being afraid of meeting with Don Rodriguez in my way.

C H A P. VI.

What Road he took when he set out from Valladolid, and what Person he joined on the Road.

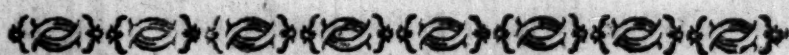
I Walked as quick as possible, often looking behind me to see if this terrible Biscayen was not following me. My imagination was so full of him, that I felt my heart every moment throb with fear; however, when I had gone about a league, I plucked up my courage, and continued my journey at an easier rate towards Madrid, where I intended to go. I should have left Valladolid without regret, had it not been for the leaving Fabricio, my dear Pylades, whom I had not had an opportunity of bidding farewell. I was not in the least sorry for having renounced physic; on the contrary, I asked pardon of God for having practised it at all. I did not fail however to count with pleasure the money I had in my pocket, though it was the salary for my murders. I resembled those women who cease to be libertines, but always keep the money they have made by it. I had reals pretty near to the value of five ducats. That was all my riches. I promised myself that that would take me to Madrid, where I did not doubt of getting a good place. Besides, I had a great desire of being in that superb city, which I had heard so much boasted, as being an epitome of all the wonders in the world.

While I was meditating on what I had heard of it, and amusing myself with the pleasures I should find there, I heard the voice of a man singing, coming behind me. He had a knapsack on his back, a guitar hanging about his neck, and a long sword by his side. He went so quick, that he soon joined me. It was one of the journeymen barbers who had been in prison with me, about the adventure of the ring. Notwithstanding the change of dress, we immediately knew one another, and were amazed to meet so unexpectedly. I testified to him how glad I was of having him for a companion on the road, and on his side he appeared to be pleased with seeing me again. I informed him why I had abandoned Valladolid, and he on his part told me that he had a quarrel with his master, and that they had reciprocally bid one another an eternal adieu. If I had chose, added he, to have staid at Valladolid any longer, I could have had the choice of ten shops, for I may say without vanity, that there is not a barber in Spain who can handle a razor or curl a mustachio better than me. But I could not resist the great desire I had of returning to my own country, from whence I have been absent ten years. I want to breathe my native air a little, and know in what situation my relations are. I will be with them in two days, for they live at Olmedo, a large village on this side of Segovia.

I determined to accompany the barber there, and go from thence to Segovia, and get some convenience

convenience to convey myself to Madrid. As we continued our journey, we talked of indifferent things. He was a good-humoured young man, and very witty; after we had had an hour's conversation, he asked me if I was not hungry. I answered, that he should see that at the first inn we came to. Let us not wait for that, says he, I have something in my budget to breakfast on. When I travel I always take care to lay in a stock of provisions; I do not load myself with such useless baggage as cloaths and linen; I put nothing in it but razors, wash balls, and provisions for the mouth. I praised his prudence, and consented to do as he proposed. I was very hungry, and determined to make a good meal on my comrade's cargo, after what he had said of it. We went a little out of the highway, in order to sit upon the grass, where my friend the barber pulled out his provender, which consisted of five or six onions, and a few crusts of bread and cheese; but what he valued himself on was a small bottle full, as he said, of fine wine. Though our entertainment was not very delicate, we were both of us extremely hungry, which made us relish it very well. We emptied the bottle, which held about two pints, and did not contain any thing worth boasting so much of. After we had thus breakfasted we got up, and proceeded on our journey with good good spirits. Fabricio had informed the barber that I had met with many strange adventures, and he wanted to hear them from myself. I thought I could not refuse a person any thing who had

treated me so well ; I satisfied his curiosity, and desired him to oblige me with the history of his life. My history, says he, is not worth relating, it contains nothing but plain facts. Nevertheless, since we have nothing better to discourse of, I will relate it to you such as it is. So saying, he thus began.



C H A P. VII.

The History of the Journeyman-Barber.

MY grandfather, Fernand Pérez de la Fuente (I love to trace things from the beginning) after having been fifty years a barber in the village of Olmedo, died, leaving behind him four sons. The eldest, named Nicolas, took possession of his shop, and succeeded him in his profession. Bertrand, who was the second, wanting to have a trade, became a mercer. Thomas, the third, became a school-master, and as for the fourth, whose name was Pedro, who had a genius for the belles lettres, he sold a small piece of land which he had, and went to live at Madrid. The three other brothers did not separate, they remained at Olmedo, and married husbandmen's daughter, who did not bring them much money, but instead of that blessed them with plenty of children. They seemingly outvied one another in getting them. My mother, who was wife of the barber, in five years after her

her marriage brought six into the world. I was one of the number. My father taught me to shave when I was very young, and when I was fifteen years of age, he put this knapsack on my shoulders, and a long sword to my side, and said to me, Go, Diego, thou art now in a condition to get thy bread; go and see the country, it will teach thee thy business better than staying at home, and return not till thou hast made the tour of Spain. Let me not so much as hear thee named till thou hast done that. As soon as he had said these words, he embraced me, and turned me out of the house.

Such was the parting I had from my father. As for my mother, who was not quite so rude in her behaviour, she appeared sorry at my departure; the tears trickled down her cheeks, and she slipped a ducat into my hand. I thus set off from Olmedo, and took the road to Segovia. I had not gone far, before I stopt to examine my knapsack; I had a great desire to see the contents of it, and know exactly what I was in possession of. I found a razor-case in it, with two razors, which seemed to have shaved ten generations, it was so much worn, a leather to set them upon, and a bit of soap. There was likewise a new canvas shirt and an old pair of shoes, which had been my father's, and what gave me more pleasure than all the rest, twenty reals wrapt up in an old linen rag. This was my stock; by which you may judge that Mr. Nicolas the barber relied very much on my dexterity, since he gave me so small a stock of every thing. Neverthe-

less, the possession of one ducat and twenty reals cannot fail pleasing a young man who had never had so much money. I thought my finances would be inexhaustible, and continued my journey, transported with joy, every now and then looking at the sword which hung at my side, and was sometimes like to overturn me by getting between my legs.

I got to Antiaquines that night, very hungry; I lodged at an inn, and with an air of authority, as if I had been a person of fortune, ordered supper. After my landlord had viewed me some time, and observed what sort of a person he had to deal with, he said, Young gentleman, you shall be pleased, and used like a prince. He then shewed me into a little room, where I had about half an hour after an old rabbit brought me, which I do not in the least doubt had been the mother of many that had been ragouts last year. This excellent dish was accompanied with some wine, so good, as he said, that the king could not drink better. However, I perceived it was very sour, notwithstanding he praised it so much; but I swallowed it as greedily as I did the rabbit, which went down in whole pieces, being too tough to be dispatched by the teeth. To compleat my treatment like a prince, I was conducted to a bed more suitable to keep a man awake than asleep. As short as I was myself, I could not stretch out my legs, it was so short. Besides, it had only a bad flock bed instead of a feather bed, and was covered with a doubled sheet, which since it had been last washed had served

served a hundred different travellers. Nevertheless, thanks to my youth and constitution, I slept soundly all night, notwithstanding I had eat so heartily of the old coney, and drank so much of the delicious wine my landlord boasted of.

The next day, after I had breakfasted, and paid well for my good cheer, I proceeded on my journey, and got safely to Segovia, and had the good luck on my first arrival to be employed in a shop for my board and lodging. I only stayed here six months; I was seduced by a journeyman barber with whom I was acquainted, who wanted to see Madrid, and we set off together for that city. I easily got a place there on the same terms as at Segovia. It was a much-frequented shop, being situated near the church of St. Cress and the prince's theatre. My master's two journeyman and I were scarce sufficient to shave them. I saw people of all ranks, and among others authors and players. One day two of the former happening to be together in our shop, began to talk of the poetry and poets of the time, and hearing my uncle's name mentioned, I listened more attentively to what they said. Don Juan de Zavaleta, said one of them, is, in my opinion, an author whom the public ought to take no notice of; he is without both fire and fancy, his last piece is intolerable. And pray, said the other, what is Louis Vellez de Guevara worth? did any body ever see such stuff? They then mentioned a number of other poets, whose names I have forgotten. I only mind that they spoke disrespectfully of them all ex-

cept my uncle, of whom they made honourable mention, and agreed that he was a man of merit. Yes, Don Pedro de la Fuente is an excellent author, says one of them. There is a great deal of pleasantry in his works, which makes them agreeably satyrical. I am not surprized that both the court and town are fond of him, and that he has several salaries from the grandees. He has got a good parcel of money from them. He lives with the duke de Medina Celi. He spends nothing, and must be rich.

I took care not to lose a word of what the poets said of my uncle; we had heard at home, that he made a noise in Madrid by his writings; some people who travelled thro' Olmedo informed us of it; but as we had never heard from him, and as he seemed to be easy about us, we were as indifferent about him. I determined however not to let slip such an opportunity, but to make myself known to him, as soon as I heard that he was in good circumstances, and knew where he lived. One thing a little perplexed me, the authors called him Don Pedro. This Don gave me some uneasiness. I was afraid it might not be my uncle, but some other poet. Nevertheless I was resolved to go and see whether it was him or not: I did not know but he might have become a gentleman as well as a wit. For this intent, I dressed myself one morning as well as possible, and, with my mother's permission, went to see him, not a little proud of being the nephew of a person who had by his

his genius got such a reputation. Barbers of all people in the world are not the least susceptible of vanity, therefore I began to conceive a great opinion of myself, and walking with an haughty air, enquired where the duke de Medina Celi lived. When I came to the gate I told the porter that I wanted to speak with Don Pedro de la Fuente. As soon as the porter heard him named, he pointed to a little staircase at the further end of a court, and said, Go up those stairs, and knock at the first door on the right hand. I did as he ordered me, and a young man coming out, I asked him, if Signior Don Pedro de la Fuente lodged there? Yes, answered he, but he cannot be spoke with at present. I should be glad to speak with him, said I, because I bring him news from his friends. I could not, replied he, at present introduce you to him, altho' you brought him news from the Pope, for he is studyng, and when that is the case, one must have a care of disturbing him: he cannot be seen till noon, so that you may go and return again at that time.

I went from thence into the city, and walked about, contemplating on the reception I should have from my uncle, who I thought would be very glad to see me. I judged of him by myself, and expected that we should have a very joyful meeting. I returned to his lodgings at the appointed time. You are come, said his valet. in the very nick of time, for my matter was just going out. Stay a little, and I will let him know you are here. He left me in

the antichamber, and immediately came back and conducted me to his master, who had such a resemblance of our family, that I immediately knew him. I thought it was my very uncle Thomas, whom I had left at home, he was so like him. I with the most profound respect saluted him, and informed him that I was the son of Mr. Nicolas de la Fuente, barber at Olmedo; that I had been three weeks in Madrid, following the same trade as a journeyman, and that I intended to make the tour of Spain to improve myself. I perceived my uncle mused while I spoke. It was evident that he was considering whether he should disown me for his nephew, or shake me off in as dexterous a manner as possible. He chose the latter, and affecting to smile, said, Well, how do thy father and uncle do, how does it go with them? I then began to describe the copious propagation of our family; I told him all the children's names, both male and female, and added their godfathers' and godmothers' to the list. He did not seem to interest himself in what I said, and when I had ended, Diego, said he, I approve mightily of thy resolution of travelling the country to perfect thyself in thy profession, and would advise thee as soon as possible to leave Madrid. It is a destructive place for youth, child, thou wilt be ruined here. It will be better for thee to go and reside in some other cities of the kingdom, where people are not so corrupt. Go then, continued he, and when thou art ready to set out come to me again. I will give thee a pistole to bear thy expenses

ces thro' Spain. As soon as he had said these words, he gently pushed me out of the room, and bid me go home.

I had not the sense to see that he wanted me removed from Madrid. I went back to our shop and related what had passed to my master. He knew no more of Don Pedro's intention than I did myself. I am not of your uncle's way of thinking, said he, I think you should rather settle in this city, than run rambling about the country. As he is acquainted with so many great folks, he can easily get you a place in some good family, and put you in a way to make your fortune. I was pleased with this discourse, and in two days after returned again to my uncle's, to propose to him that he should do his endeavours to get me into some nobleman's family. But he did not at all approve of this proposal. A vain man, who every day dined either with one great person or other, was not willing that his nephew should sit with the servants while he dined with their masters. Little Diego would have made Don Pedro blush. Therefore he fell upon me, and reproved me with a furious look. How, you little rascal, will you quit your trade? What idle people have been giving you such pernicious counsel? get from me immediately, and never let me see thee again, or I will make thee be chastised as thou deservest. These words confounded me, and still more the tone in which my uncle spoke them. I withdrew with tears in my eyes, very much vexed that he should use me so ill. But having naturally good spirits, I soon

soon gave over weeping. My grief turned to indignation, and I determined to take no further notice of this unkind relation, having hitherto lived without his assistance.

I now thought of nothing but making myself perfect in my business. I was very diligent all day, and in the evening amused myself with learning to play on the guitar. My master for that instrument was an old Signior Escudero, whom I shaved. He had been formerly a choirister in a cathedral. His name was Marcos d' Obregon. He was a sage person, and had as much wit as experience. He was as fond of me as if I had been his own child. He was gentleman-usher to a doctor's wife who lived near our house. When we had done work I went to him every night, and we two sitting on the threshold of the door made a little concert, which was not at all disagreeable to those that heard us. We pleased in particular Donna Margellina, the doctor's wife, who was accustomed to come into the entry to hear us, and sometimes made us give her some encores when any airs pleased her. Her husband was as well pleased with us as she was. He was not the least jealous of her, though he was a Spaniard, and an old man. Besides, his profession took him up wholly; and as he used to return every night very weary from visiting his patients, so he went early to bed and did not mind our serenading his wife. It is probable indeed he imagined our music was not capable of making any dangerous impressions upon her, and he confided too much in his wife's conduct to suspect her.

her. Margellina indeed was young and pretty, but withal so virtuous, that she would scarcely allow a man to look at her. She did not imagine there was any harm in hearkening to our music, and we might play or sing as much we thought proper, she was not offended at it.

As I came one evening to the physician's door, intending to play as usual, I found the old gentleman-usher waiting for me. He took me by the hand, and said he wanted to take a walk with me before we began our concert. He then led me into a by-street, where imagining that we would be private enough, he in a melancholy tone thus spoke : Don Diego, I have some particular thing to tell you. My child, I am apprehensive, that we both of us shall repent diverting ourselves with serenades every night at our master's door. I have certainly a great regard for you. I am pleased that I have taught you to sing and play on the guitar : but had I foreseen the misfortune that threatens us, I would have chosen another place for us to practise our lessons in. I was terrified with this discourse, and begged that he would explain himself to me; for if we are in any danger, I should be glad to get out of it as fast as possible. I will inform you, said he, what I have to say, and then you may comprehend the danger we are in. When I entered into the doctor's service, which was about a year since, he said to me one morning, pretending me to his wife, Marcos, this is your mistress; you are to attend her wherever she goes. I was much taken with Donna Margelli-

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na, I thought her very handsome, and was particularly delighted with her agreeable carriage. Signior, said I to the doctor, I am too happy in serving so beautiful a lady. Margellina was not pleased with what I said, and cried in a passion, you are a pretty fellow indeed, you take more upon you than becomes you; I will not allow such things to be said to me. Such cruel words from so agreeable a person greatly surprized me. I could not reconcile them to the softness of her air. Her husband was accustomed to them, and valued himself upon having a wife of so rare a character. He told me that his wife was a prodigy of virtue, and seeing she was putting on her scarf, and making ready to go to church, he ordered me to attend her. No sooner were we got into the street, than, what is not extraordinary in such cases, several men smitten with Donna Margellina's beauty, paid her a great many compliments as she passed along. You cannot think how silly and foolish the answers were which she gave them. They were all surprized, and could not think there was a woman in the world who was not fond of flattery. Madam, said I to her, do not you hear what these gentlemen say to you? One had better not speak at all than be in a passion. No, no, says she, I will let these insolent fellows see that I am not a person who will allow them to treat me with disrespect. In short, she was so impertinent, that I could not avoid informing her of my opinion of it, whether she approved of it or not. I represented to her
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in as easy a manner as possible, that she did not do justice to nature, and ruined a thousand good qualities by her bad temper; that a polite good natured woman might make herself beloved, without the aid of beauty, whereas a beautiful woman would be despised, if good breeding and complaisance were wanting. I said a great deal more to her to the same purpose, calculated for the reforming of her behaviour. I was frightened that my mistress would have been enraged at the freedom I took, and that she would have severely reprov'd me for it, but she bore with it, contenting herself with not minding what I now said, or at other times to the same purpose.

At last I grew tired of admonishing her in vain, and left her to the fierceness of her nature. In the mean while, what do you think? this savage disposition, this haughty woman, is quite changed within these two months. She is agreeable and civil to every body; she is not the same Margellina who answered men so sillily; she now says the most obliging things in the world. She is fond of flattery, and likes to be told that she is handsome, and that a man cannot with safety look at her. One can scarcely think how she is altered; and what you should be amazed at is, you yourself are the reason of so great a miracle: yes, my dear Diego, says he, it is you who have thus changed Donna Margellina; you have converted the tigress into a lamb: in short, all her thoughts run upon you. I have more than once perceived it, and I am either unacquainted with what sort of creatures women are,

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or she is violently in love with you. This, my boy, is the bad news I have to inform you of, and the troublesome conjuncture we are fallen into.

I cannot think, replied I to the old squire, that we have so much reason to be grieved for this affair, or that it is unlucky for me to be admired by a pretty lady. Ah, Diego, said he, you talk like a silly young man; you look to nothing but the pleasure, but I regard the trouble with which it is attended. It will all be discovered at last. If you proceed singing at our door, you will inflame Margellina still more and more, and perhaps at last she will become so weak as to let Dr. Oloroso see it. Tho' now, because he thinks he has no reason to be jealous, he appears very complaisant, he will then become furious against thee, and revenge himself upon her, and in all probability neither you nor I may come off well upon this occasion. Why, Signior Marcos, said I, your reasons have convinced me, I will follow your advice. We have nothing to do, says he, but to give over our concerts. You must not appear any more before my mistress, she will be quiet when she does not see you. Stay at home, and I will come to you, and we may play upon the guitar, without running any hazard. With all my heart, replied I, and I promise you never to come near your house again. Indeed I determined not to sing at the Doctor's gate again, but for the future to keep close to my shop, since I was so dangerous a person to be seen.

However, in a little time honest Marcos found that

that the means he proposed to extinguish Donna Margellina's flame had quite a contrary effect. The lady finding that we did not sing for two nights successively, asked him why we had given over our concert, and for what reason she did not see me? He answered, that I was so engaged with my business, that I had not a minute to spare for amusements. She appeared satisfied with this excuse, and supported my absence pretty well for three days longer, but then at the end of that time she lost all patience, and said to her gentleman-usher, Marcos, you impose on me, there must be some other reason why Diego does not come hither. Inform me what it is, I order you, conceal nothing from me. I found a new excuse for him. Madam, said I, since you will know the truth, I must inform you, that after we had been playing our concert, it often happened that the buttery has been locked up when he went home, and he has been obliged to go supperless to bed. How, supperless! cried she in a rage. Why did not you inform me of this sooner? Poor child, go immediately to him, and bring him hither this very night; he shall not go home supperless, I shall always take care to have something reserved for him here.

What is this I hear? said the gentleman usher, making as if he was amazed at her discourse. Heavens! is it you, Madam, that talks after this manner? What an alteration is here! How long have you been so compassionate? How long! replied she very hastily; ever since you came into this house, or rather ever since you condemn-
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ed me for my behaviour. But alas ! added she with a languishing look, I have passed from one extreme to another ; from insensible and haughty I am become tender and soft. I am fond of your young friend Diego, and cannot help it. His absence strengthens my passion instead of weakening it. Can it be possible, says the old man, that a young lad, who is neither pretty nor genteel, should be the object of so violent a passion ? I would forgive your sentiments, if they had been inspired by some gentleman, a man of character. Ah Marcos, interrupted Margellina, I do not resemble the rest of my sex ; or else you know not what to make of them, notwithstanding all your experience, if you think that merit determines their choice. If I may be allowed to say any thing, they love without consideration : Love is an object of the mind that directs one to an object, and in spite of all resistance, fixes one to it. It is a distemper that seizes us like the madness of dogs and other animals. Therefore do not represent to me that Diego is not worthy of my affection. It is sufficient that I love him, to find a thousand good qualities in him that you do not see, and perhaps he does not possess. It is endless for you to inform me that neither his face nor shape merit my regard. He appears to me fairer than the day, and born on purpose to charm. Besides, his voice has a sweetness that delights me, and he plays on the guitar, in my opinion, with a grace peculiar to himself. But, Madam, said Marcos, do you think of his condition ? that he is—I think of nothing but him, inter-

interrupted she, and that should be no objection, were I even a woman of quality.

The consequence of this conference was, that the old usher thinking that there was no appearance of gaining any thing by his arguments, ceased opposing his mistress's inclination; as a skilful pilot yields to a storm which drives him from the port whither he was bound. He did more to make his patroness contented; he came to me, and taking me aside, informed me what had passed between him and her. You see, Diego, says he, that we must continue our concerts at Margellina's door. There is a necessity for it, friend, the lady must see you again, or she will commit some piece of indiscretion or other, that may hurt her reputation. I told him, that I would come in the evening with my guitar to her house, and that he might carry this agreeable piece of news to his mistress. He did so; and she was delighted to hear it, and impatiently waited for the appointed time to see me, and hearken to my music.

In the mean time a disagreeable accident had like to have ruined all. I could not leave my master's shop before it was night, which for my sins proved very dark. I groped my way along the street, and had gone about half my journey, when a window opened, and I was saluted with a shower, which, I assure you, was not of essence. I had all of it; and in this condition, did not know what to do. If I was to return home in that condition, I should be laughed at; and I was shocked at the thought of going in that pickle to Margel-

Margellina. However, I had so great a desire to renew my concert, that I got soon there, and found the old usher waiting for me at the door. He informed me Dr. Oloroso was gone to bed, and that we might amuse ourselves very freely. I replied, that I must clean myself in the first place. I then related to him the misfortune I had met with. He sympathized with me, and carried me to a hall, where his mistress waited for us. She no sooner was informed of my adventure, and saw what condition I was in, than she pitied me as much as if I had met with the greatest misfortune. She afterwards bestowed a thousand curses on the person that had so used me. Pray do not be in such a passion, madam, says Marcos; it does not deserve it. How! answered she, should not I abuse the wicked creature that has used this little lamb so, this dove without a gall, who does not even complain of being so insulted? If I was a man, I would revenge it this instant.

A number of other things she said, which shewed the violence of her love; and her actions were as expressive of it as her words; for while Marcos was busy wiping me with a napkin, she ran to her chamber, and brought a box of perfume; she sweetened my cloaths with odoriferous drugs which she burned. She afterwards sprinkled abundance of essences upon them. The aspersion and fumigation being done, this kind woman went to the kitchen herself for some wine, bread, and roasted meat, which she caused to be set aside for my supper; and making me eat, took delight in serving me. Sometimes she would

would cut my victuals, and sometimes pour me out wine, notwithstanding all that we could do to prevent her. After I had supped, the gentlemen of the concert tuned their voices to their guitars. We performed a symphony, at which Margellina was delighted. We indeed affected to sing some airs, the words of which humoured her passion; and it must be observed, that as I played, I frequently cast a soft glance at her, which was fresh fuel to her flame, and I began to think the game agreeable enough. Tho' the concert continued a good while, I was not wearied with it. As for the lady, who thought the hours were but minutes, she would with a deal of pleasure have heard us all night, if the old squire, to whom the time seemed very long, had not often reminded her that it was late. She gave him the trouble to repeat it a good many times to her; but she had to deal with one that was not easily tired on that subject; and who would not let her be at rest, till I quitted the house. This prudent and discreet man, seeing his mistress given up to the pleasing of her passion, was afraid of something bad happening if he did not hinder it. His fear was but too well grounded; the doctor either suspecting some private intrigue, or being roused by that devil Jealousy, who had let him rest till then, found fault with our concerts, and a short time after ordered them to be discontinued, without giving any reason for it, only saying, he would not allow strangers to come to his house. Marcos warned me of it, and as it was chiefly intended for me, I was very

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ry much mortified at it. I had conceived hopes which I was sorry to lose.

However, to relate things like a faithful historian, I own to you that I patiently bore this misfortune. It was not the case with Margellina; she could not endure it. Dear Marcos, said she to her usher, I look for assistance from you alone. Order it so, I beg of you, that I may privately see Diego. What would you have me to do? said the old man in a passion: I have humoured you too much already. I shall not help to dishonour my master, by gratifying your too ardent desires, nor will I ruin your character, and bring infamy upon myself. I, whose character, as a faithful domestic, has always been irreproachable, I will rather leave your service than assist you in so ungenerous an action. Ah! Marcos, said the lady, you will ruin me when you talk of leaving me. Cruel as you are, will you abandon me, after having brought me into this wretched condition? Give me again my pride and savage humour that you have taken from me. Ah! that I still possessed those happy defects, I should now be at ease, whereas your imprudent remonstrances have deprived me of the repose I once enjoyed. By endeavouring to correct my morals you have corrupted them. But ah! added she, weeping, why do I censure and blame you unjustly? No, no, father, you are not the author of my misfortune. It is my ill fate that prepares so much affliction for me. Do not take notice therefore of my vain discourse, I entreat you. My passion, alas! disorders my mind. Have compassion

compassion on my weakness, all my comfort is in you; and if my life is dear to you, be not against giving me your assistance.

Saying this, she wept in such a manner, that she could not proceed. She pulled out her handkerchief, and throwing it over her face, fell back into a chair like a person overwhelmed with affliction. Old Marcos, who was perhaps as well acquainted with his business as any usher in Spain, could not resist so moving a sight. It affected him so much, that he wept as well as his mistress, and said to her very affectionately, Ah! madam, you are enough to seduce any body. I cannot resist your sorrow. It vanquishes my virtue; I promise you all the assistance that lies in power: I am not amazed that love has been able to make you forget your duty, since pity alone has made me forget mine. Thus the old usher, in spite of his irreproachable conduct, very obligingly devoted himself to Margellina's passion. He came one morning to inform me of all this; and acquainted me when he left me, that he had already concerted a way to get me a private interview with the lady. This gave me fresh hopes. But I received another kind of news before two hours were gone. An apothecary's apprentice in the neighbourhood came to be shaved. While I was setting my razor, he asked me, if I knew what was the matter with my friend, the old gentleman-usher, Marcos d'Obregon, and what was the reason that he had left Dr. Oloroso? I answered, no. He replied, it is certainly true, he was dismissed just as I came

hither. I heard it from Dr. Cloroso himself, who came to our house, and talking with my master, said to him, that he had turned off his old usher, being determined to put his wife under the direction of a faithful, severe, and watchful duenna, intreating him to recommend him to one. I understand you, said my master, interrupting him; you have occasion for such a one as Dame Melancia, who was governante to my wife, and who is still in my house, though my wife has been dead these six weeks. I cannot well be without her, but will part with her to you, for whose honour I have particular a interest; you may trust her with the care of your forehead. She is an excellent duenna, and a very dragon, where the chastity of the sex is concerned. I never saw so much as the shadow of a gallant in my house, during the twelve years that she was with my wife, who, you know, was both young and handsome. And truly she had no easy task of it; for I must own to you the defunct was once very coquettish inclined; but dame Melancia soon reformed her, and instilled a love of virtue into her. In short, this governante is a treasure; and you will thank me more than once for making you a present of her. The doctor seemed greatly pleased for the favour my master had done him; and they both agreed that the old usher's place should be supplied by the duenna.

This news terribly perplexed those ideas of pleasure which I began to regale myself with; and soon after Marcos himself came to confirm what I had been informed of by the apothecary's man.

man. Dear Diego, says he, how glad am I that Dr. Oloroso has put me out of his house! How much trouble will it save me! besides taking me from so base an employment, what uneasiness should I have had in bringing you and Margellina together in private! Thank God, I am freed from that care, and the danger which accompanied it. You on your part, my son, ought to console yourself for the loss of a few sweet moments, by considering what numberless sorrows would have followed after. I listened to Marcos's reflexions the more attentively, because I had no longer hopes of seeing Margellina again. I own I was not one of those stubborn lovers who are incited by obstacles; and if I had been one of them, Dame Melancia's character was enough to have discouraged me. Nevertheless, dreadful as she had been described to me, I understood, that the doctor's wife had either thrown this Argos to sleep, or corrupted her virtue. As I was going to shave one of our neighbours, I was stopped in the street by a decent old woman, who asked me if my name was not Diego de la Fuente? I replied, Yes. Then you are the person I look for, said she. Come to Donna Margellina's door to-night, and make some signal by which you may be known, and I will give you admittance into the house. We should agree, said I, about the signal beforehand. I can imitate a cat to the life, and will mew several times before the door. That is sufficient, replied this agent of love. I will inform her of your answer. Your servant, Signior Diego. God bless you! Ah what a

good soul you are! I wish I was but fifteen years old for your sake, I would not engage you for another. At these words the officious beldame left me: and you may easily imagine that I was greatly agitated by this message. Farewell to Marcos's reflections! I waited impatiently for night, and when I imagined Dr. Oloroso was a-bed, I went to his door. I mewed several times, as a sign that I was come, and counterfeited it so well that it was no doubt an honour to him that taught me so fine an art. Immediately Margellina herself came gently to the door, opened it, and let me into the house. We went to the hall where we last held our concert, it was lightened only by a small lamp in the chimney: we sat down near to one another that we might talk the more conveniently, and were both pretty much in confusion; however, with this difference, that her's was occasioned by the pleasure of our meeting, while mine was mixed with fear. My fair one in vain told me that we had nothing to dread with regard to her husband. Every joint of me shivered; and it was evident that it was not all the trembling of a lover. Madam, said I, have you been able to deceive the circumpection of your governante? After what I have heard of Dame Melancia, I thought it would never be in my power to hear from you again, much less to be with you in private. Donna Margellina smiled at this discourse, and said to me, You will not be amazed at this secret meeting of ours, when I have informed you what has passed between my duenna and me. My husband
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caressed her in an extraordinary manner, when she first came into this house; he told me that he had committed me to the care of that discreet lady, who was a summary of all the virtues: a looking-glass which I was to have constantly before my eyes, to learn discretion by. He added, this surprizing person governed an apothecary's wife, a friend of mine, twelve years, and in such a manner that she became a perfect saint by her instruction.

This recommendation, which was confirmed by Dame Melancia's four looks, occasioned me many a tear, and threw me into despair. I imagined how I was to be lectured by her from morning to night, and rebuked all the day long. In short, I thought that I would have been the most wretched woman upon earth, and imagining it endless to be reserved, which made me not care how I behaved to a duenna, from whom I expected no mercy, I determined to begin with her, and said to her, as soon as I had an opportunity, you are doubtless preparing to make me endure as much as you can from you, but I must inform you beforehand, that I am not overstocked with patience, and will on my part mortify you as much as I can. I must be plain with you, I have a passion in my breast which it is not in the power of your remonstrances to cure me of, so take your measures accordingly. Be as watchful as you can, I must own that I will do my endeavours to deceive you. At these words the duenna changed her looks; and in place of a severe lecture, which I was in expectation

tation of, she smiling said, I am delighted with your humour, and will be as free as you, I see we are intended for one another. Ah! fair lady, you do not know me, if you think of me by what the doctor your husband says of me, or by my sour aspect. I am far from being against pleasure; I never took in hand to serve jealous husbands, but in order to assist their beautiful wives. I have long been possessed of the great art of dissimulation, and may say that I am doubly happy, since I enjoy, at the same time, the reputation of virtue, and the convenience of vice. Between you and me, mankind are only virtuous at this rate; it costs too much to be entirely so. Now-a-days it is enough if we possess the appearance of virtue.

Let me conduct you, continued the gover-nante; I will engage that we will soon make old Doctor Oloroso have as good an opinion of his wife and me, as Signior Apuntador the apothecary had of his and me. Poor Apuntador! how many tricks have his wife and I played him! His spouse was a beautiful creature, so good tempered, rest her soul, I will answer for her, that she made a good use of her youth. She had I do not know how many admirers, whom I let into the house without being discovered by her husband: therefore, Madam, have a better opinion of me, and be assured that whatever talent the old usher had, you will lose nothing by the change. Perhaps I may be more useful to you than he was.

I leave you to think, Diego, whether the
duenna's

duenna's frank declaration was agreeable to me or not. I imagined her to be the most rigid of women: so apt are we to be deceived in our sex. I embraced her with such joy, that she perceived I was glad to have so good-natured a governante. I imparted my sentiments freely to her, and desired that she would as soon as possible contrive a private meeting with you; and she has done it. It was she who got the old woman who spoke to you this morning, and who has often been employed by her and the apothecary's wife. But what is the best of all in this adventure, continued Margellina smiling, is that Melancia, upon my informing her that my husband is a sound sleeper, is this moment in bed with him supplying my place. So much the worse, Madam, said I, I do not approve of the contrivance: your spouse may wake, and discover the cheat. He cannot find it out, replied she hastily, do not give yourself any concern about that, nor let a groundless dread deprive you of the pleasure that you ought to have with a young lady who has an affection for you. The doctor's wife perceiving that I could not avoid being still afraid, notwithstanding her assurance, left nothing undone to encourage me, that she could think of, and she practised so many different ways, that love got the better of my fear at last, and I was determined to seize that opportunity; when all of a sudden, in the height of my joy and passion, we heard a loud rap at the door; which put the blind god, with all his train of smiles and sports to flight. Margellina im-

mediately concealed me under a table in the hall. She put out the light; and as it had been agreed between her governante and her, in case such an accident should happen, went directly to the door of her husband's chamber. The rapping still continued; the whole house rung with it. The doctor started out of his sleep, put on his morning gown, and called Melancia. The governante got out of bed, although the doctor, thinking it had been his wife, told her to lie still. She ran to her mistress, who waited for her at the door; and the duenna making as if she had met her coming out of the chamber, said, I beg that you would go to bed again, Madam, and I will go and see who is at the door. Margellina undressed as fast as possible, and went to bed to the doctor, who never suspected that he was deceived. This scene indeed was performed in the dark by two actresses, one of whom was an excellent one, and the other had a great inclination to become so.

The governante put on her night-gown, and went with a candle in her hand, to open the door, and came back soon, saying to the doctor, Be so good as rise, Sir, Fernandez de Buendia the bookseller has taken an apoplectic fit, and you are desired to go to him as soon as possible.

The doctor dressed himself as fast as he could, and went to the bookseller's. His wife, accompanied by the duenna, came to the hall in her morning-gown, and drew me more dead than alive out from under the table. Don't be afraid, Diego, says Margellina; be of good courage. She then

then informed me of every thing that had passed, and would willingly have renewed the conversation which the incident had interrupted; but the duenna would not suffer her. Madam, said she, your husband may return immediately; the book-feller may be dead. Besides, continued she, seeing me almost dead with fear, what can you make of this poor creature? He is in no condition to come off as he should. You had better defer it at present, and let him return again to-morrow. Donna Margellina agreed to do so, but with regret. She was always fond of the present time; and I believe she was very sorry that she could not then bestow on her husband the new bonnet with which she intended to cap him.

For my own part, I was not so sorry for losing love's dear favours, as I was glad for having got out of the danger I was in. I went back to my master's, and spent the remainder of the night in thinking about my adventure. I was doubtful whether I should return again the next night. I still dreaded some new disgrace; but the devil, who always forwards one on like occasions, suggested to me, that I should be a fool now not to push my fortune. He represented me Margellina's charms, and the joys that were promised me in the possession of them. This made me resolve to make another attempt; and I determined to do it with a better heart than I had done before. I went about eleven o'clock the next night, in this good disposition, to Margellina's; it was very dark, and not a star

to be seen. I mewed two or three times, to let them know that I was there; and nobody coming to me, I not only mewed again, but imitated all the different cries of a cat, which I had been taught by a shepherd at Olmedo. I acted my part so well, that a neighbour going home, and thinking that I was one of those animals, took up a stone, and threw at me with all his strength, saying, Damn your squalling. I received the stone on my head, which stunned me with the blow. I felt myself wounded, and that was sufficient to cure me of my gallantry. I lost my love with my blood, went home, and raised the whole house. My master dressed my wound, which he thought very dangerous. However, I got better in three weeks. I have not heard of Margellina every since; and fancy Dame Melancia, in order to disengage her from me, has introduced her to a lover of her own acquaintance. I did not concern myself much about it, and soon after left Madrid, to pursue the tour of Spain, which I designed to make.

C H A P.

C H A P. VIII.

How Gil Blas and his Companion came up with a Man soaking Bread in Water ; and the Conversation they had together.

SIGNIOR Diego de la Fuente related other adventures of his to me ; but they are not worth the reciting. However, I was obliged to hear them, though they were so tedious, that they brought us to Ponte de Duera ; and we remained in that village the rest of the day. We had pease-soup and a hare for supper ; the latter was neither young nor fresh. We pursued our journey the next day as soon as it was light, having furnished ourselves with pretty good bread and wine, taking with us also half of the hare which we had left from our supper.

When we had gone about six miles, we began to have an appetite ; and perceiving about an hundred yards off the high road a good many trees, we went there to take our breakfast. We found here a man of eight and twenty years of age, soaking some crusts of bread in a spring. A long rapier lay by him, and a knapsack, which he carried on his shoulders. We saluted him in a civil manner, and he did us the same. He then presented us some of his crusts, asking with a smile, whether we would do as he did ? We replied, with all our heart, provided he would allow us to join our repast with his, and accept

of part of it. He consented to it, and we produced what we had, and the stranger was very well satisfied with it. So, gentlemen, says he, I see you are well provided: you are provident people. For my own part, I am not so precautions. I depend mostly upon chance: however, as it is now with me, I must without vanity inform you, that I make a brilliant appearance sometimes. I often have guards attending me, and am used like a prince. I understand you, said Diego; you would hint to us that you are a player. You are right, says the other; I have been an actor these fifteen years. I could when I was a child perform many parts. To be plain with you, said the barber, shaking his head, I can scarcely believe you; I am too well acquainted with the players. Those gentlemen do not use to travel on foot like you, nor live on bread and water. I am afraid that you are rather the candle snuffer. Judge of me as you think proper, replied the actor, but I assure you I have performed many principal parts and among the rest love ones. If that is the case, says my comrade, I congratulate you upon it: and Signior Gil Blas and myself are proud of having the honour to breakfast with a person of so great consequence.

Saying this, we all fell to, and in a short time finished the remains of the hare. We emptied the flask with so much haste that we had scarcely time to speak; but we renewed the conversation when our repast was finished. I am amazed, said the barber to the player, that your circumstances

circumstances are so indifferent. You have too mean an appearance for a hero of the stage; excuse me, if I speak so freely to you. So freely! said the actor, you are not well acquainted with Melchior Zapata? Thank God, I am not peevish. I like that every body should be free with me, as I love to be so with every body. I own I am not rich; you may perceive that my coat discovers my profession, and so will all the remainder of my wardrobe. He then took out of his knapsack some tinsel ornaments, some red buskins, and a dirty plume of feathers. This is my equipage, gentlemen, said he, and indeed a man may wish for better. I am surprized at it, replied Diego, sure you have no wife nor daughter. Yes, replied the player, I have a wife, who is both young and handsome: but my ill luck will have it, that she forsooth must prove virtuous. I married her, thinking that she would not let me starve; but unluckily for me, she stands upon her chastity. It is very hard that there should be but one honest woman amongst the strollers, and she must fall to my share. Indeed it is very hard, says the barber. Why did not you marry one of the company at Madrid? You could not be disappointed there. That is right, replied Zapata; but strollers must not aspire to such heroines as town actresses. An actor of the king's own company can pretend to no more than that. If one would marry a wife in the city, one might be as well supplied out of the playhouse as in it. Did you ever endeavour, says the barber to him, to get in-

to the king's company? Must a man have a great deal of merit to be admitted amongst them? A great deal of merit! replied the actor; there are twenty of them, inquire into their characters, and you will find that one half of them are fit for nothing but carrying a knapsack; yet, for all that, it is no easy matter to be admitted to be one of them. One must have powerful friends or money, to supply the want of talent. I should know it; for I have been hissed and hooted like a devil, though I deserved to be applauded for my performances. I tore my lungs, and endeavoured to resemble the most popular actors of the stage: but nothing would do. The same audience that clapped them, hissed me; such is the force of prejudice. Therefore finding that I could not please there; and having nothing to make my way for me, in defiance of those that hissed me, I am going back to Zamora to my wife and companions, who have not met with great success there neither. I wish we may get to the next town, without being forced to beg; which has been the case more than once.

Saying this, the emperor of the stage sprung up, threw his knapsack over his shoulder, put on his sword, and pronounced with a grave air, May the gods pour down their favours upon you. Diego replied in the same tone, May you on your return to Zamora find your wife another woman, and in a better humour to keep you from starving. Signior Zapata had no sooner turned his back upon us, than he fell to his gesticulations.

sticulations and declamations. The barber and I hissed him, to teach him more discretion. He imagined that he still heard the hisses at Madrid, looked back, and perceiving that it was we only who diverted ourselves at his expence, in place of being offended at our buffoonry, he took it in good part, laughing all the way, though he had very little reason for it. We also went back again to the high road, and continued our journey.



C H A P. IX.

In what State Diego found his Family, and how merry he and Gil Blas were before they separated.

THE next night we slept in a little village between Moyados and Valpuesta, whose name I have forgot, and came to the plain of Olmedo the next day about eleven o'clock. Signior Gil Blas, says my comrade, this is the place where I was born, and I am pleased at the sight of it; so natural it is for people to be fond of their country. Signior Diego, says I, a person who is so fond of his country as you appear to be, should methinks not have spoke so freely of it as you have done. Olmedo seems to be a city, and you described it only as a village. It must at least be a large town, if not a city. I ask Olmedo's pardon, replied the barber; but I must inform

inform you, that after having seen Madrid, Saragossa, Toledo, and other large cities, which I have been at in my tour of Spain, I look upon the little ones as villages.

As we advanced nearer to Olmedo, we observed a great many people gathered together; and when we came up to them, found three tents pitched at a small distance from one another, in which were cooks and butlers preparing for a feast. Some were making ready boiled and roasted meat, others pyes and fricassees; some filling bottles, and others washing glasses. What I remarked most, was a large stage erected in the middle of the place, adorned with painted paper, on which several mottoes of Greek and Latin were painted. Diego no sooner saw the inscriptions, than he said, That Greek there smells much of my uncle Thomas. I will lay a wager he has a hand in it: for, between you and me, he is a person of great qualification. He can say a number of college books by heart. The worst of it is, he is constantly repeating them in all companies, which is not agreeable to every one. My uncle has, moreover, translated many Latin and Greek authors. He is quite a master of antiquity, as may be seen by the curious remarks he has made. If it had not been him, we should not have known that children in the city of Athens cried when they were whipt. We owe that discovery to his profound knowledge. When my companion and I had made our remarks on what we had seen, we were fond of knowing

knowing the cause of such preparations. We were just going to enquire, when Diego saw his uncle, Signior Thomas de la Fuente, who it seems had the managing of the feast. We made what haste we could, to get to him; but the schoolmaster did not at first know his nephew Diego, such an alteration had ten years made on him. But at last recollecting him, he very affectionately embraced him, and said, Ah, my dear nephew! art thou come once more to thy native place? Wilt thou visit again thy household gods? And art thou returned safe and sound to thy family? Oh day, thrice and four times happy! a day deserving to be place among the red-lettered in the calendar. Friend, I have to tell thee a great deal of news. Your learned uncle Pedro is become the victim of Pluto. He took his leave of this world three months ago. The miser when alive was always frightened that he should want necessaries. He received great pensions from many grandees, and yet he spent but ten pistoles a-year for his subsistence: he had a servant, whom he starved as well as himself. He was more foolish than the Greek Aristippus, who made his slaves throw away his riches in the desarts of Lybia, as things that were incommodious for them in their march. Thy uncle was constantly heaping up gold and silver. And for whom? For heirs he would never see. He died worth thirty thousand ducats, which thy father, thy uncle Bertrand and I, have shared among us. We are now in a condition to do something for our children. My
brother

brother Nicolas has already disposed of thy sister Theresa. She is married to one of our alcaides. *Connubio junxit stabili, propriumque dicavit.* Her wedding is the cause of this festival. It is we that have been the occasion of these tents being erected here for the three heirs of Pedro; each of us have one, and each pays the expence of a day. I wish that thou hadst been here, at the beginning of the rejoicing. The day before yesterday, when they were married, thy father was at the expence: he gave a grand entertainment, which was followed by the company afterwards running at the ring. Yesterday the mercer was at the expence, and entertained us with a pastoral-comedy. He afterwards caused ten beautiful boys and girls to be dressed like shepherds and shepherdesses. He made use of all the ribbons and points in his shop to adorn them. They sung and danced the greatest part of the day, yet for all that they performed their parts very well, the spectators were not pleased with it, which shews that pastorals are quite out of fashion.

I am to be at the expence of to-day's entertainment: and I have provided a show of my own invention, to entertain the inhabitants of Olmedo with. *Finis coronat opus.* I have caused a stage to be erected, upon which, God willing, my scholars shall represent a piece composed by myself, entitled, The Amusements of Muley Bugentuf, King of Morocco. It will be very well performed, for my scholars pronounce as well as the players of Madrid. They are the
sons

sons and daughters of genteel people of Pennafiel and Segovia, who stay at my house, and are become excellent performers under my instruction. Indeed I have taken a good deal of pains with them : what they say, will be done masterly, *ut ita dicam*. I shall say nothing as to the piece, thou wilt have the pleasure of the surprize. All I shall say to thee on that head, is, that it will please the spectators. It is one of those tragic subjects that move the soul by images of death : I am of Aristotle's way of thinking, that the chief end of tragedy is, that poets should raise terror. Well, if I had composed for the stage, I would have introduced nothing on it but bloody princes and murdering heroes. I would have bathed myself in blood. I would have killed not only the principal persons in my plays, but even the guards themselves. I would have murdered even the candle-snuffer. In short, I am fond of the terrible. It is my taste. Such poems always take, they make a full house, and get the author reputation.

When he was just done speaking, we saw a great number of people coming out of the town. These were no other than the new-married couple, accompanied by their friends and relations, preceded by twelve fiddlers, who playing all together, made a terrible noise with their discord. We went to meet them; and Diego made himself known to the company, who shouted for joy, and every one was desirous of embracing him. He had enough to do to receive their expressions of friendship in a civil manner. After which
his

his father said, Diego, thou art welcome; thou findest thy parents in a better condition than when thou leftest them. I shall explain myself more particularly at another time. Then the company advanced into the plain, went into the tents, and sat down at the tables which were made ready for them. I would not quit my companion. We both dined with the bridegroom and bride, who appeared to be very well matched. Dinner lasted a pretty long while, because the schoolmaster had the ostentation to have three courses, that he might excel his brothers, who had not treated with such magnificence.

Dinner being ended, the guests seemed impatient to see Signior Thomas's piece represented, not doubting, said they, but that their expectation would be fully satisfied with the production of so fine a genius. Approaching near the theatre, we saw the fiddlers already seated in order to play between the acts. Every one was silent, waiting for the opening of the play. The performers at last appeared on the stage; and the author, with his poem in his hand. He had good reason to say the piece was tragical; for the king of Morocco in the first act, by way of amusement, kills a hundred Moorish slaves, shooting at them with bows and arrows. In the second, he beheads thirty Portuguese officers, whom one of his captains had made prisoners of war. And in the third, this monarch, tired of his wives, sets the palace on fire where they were shut up, and reduced both them and it to ashes.

The

The Portuguese officers and Moorish slaves were figures of reed very artfully made, and the palace made of paper; when it was in flames, there was heard a thousand dismal cries, that appeared to issue from amidst the flames. This concluded the piece: and the whole plain rung with the applause that such a fine tragedy met with. This justified the poet's good taste; and shewed that he knew how to make a good choice of his subject.

I imagined there was nothing more to be seen, if the Amusements of Muley Bugentuf were ended, but I was mistaken, there were prizes to be distributed. For Thomas, to make the entertainment more solemn, had ordered some of his scholars to make exercises, which they were to repeat before the company that had heard the play; and those who composed best were to have books bestowed on them, which he had bought at Segovia with his own money.

Therefore two school-benches were immediately brought on the stage, and a parcel of books elegantly bound. All the performers came up to Signior Thomas, who looked as big as the president of the college. He held a paper in his hand, on which were written the names of those that were to win the prizes. The king of Morocco, who read his part with a loud voice, got the first prize. Each scholar, as he was called, went in a respectful manner to receive his book from the schoolmaster. He then was crowned with laurel, and made to sit down on one of the benches, exposed to the admiration of the

the spectators. Yet for all so great a desire the schoolmaster had of sending away all the company well pleased, he could not complete it. For giving all the prizes to certain scholars, whose relations paid him best, the mothers of the scholars that had been neglected were affronted, and openly accused the schoolmaster of partiality. Thus this entertainment, which had done so much honour till then, was like to have resembled the feast of the Lapithæ.



THE



THE
ADVENTURES
OF
GIL BLAS
DE SANTILLANE.

BOOK III.



CHAP. I.

*Gil Blas arrives at Madrid; an Account of the
first Master he served there.*

I STOPT some time with Diego; and understanding there was a merchant, in Olmedo, who had been at Valladolid, and was returning to Segovia with four light mules, I got acquainted with him, and rode on one of them to Segovia, where he invited me to his house, and detained me there two days, so much was I got
into

into his favour. When he found I was going to set out for Madrid by the muleteer, he intrusted me with a letter, bidding me deliver it with my own hand, as it was directed. He did not inform me that it was a letter of recommendation. However, I did not fail to carry it to Signior Mattheo Melendez, a linen draper at Madrid; who no sooner knew the contents of it, than he very complaisantly said to me, Signior Gil Blas, my acquaintance, Pedro Palatio, writes in so pressing a manner in your behalf, that I must intreat you to lodge at my house. He has also desired me to use my endeavours to get you a good place, which I undertake with pleasure, not doubting but that I shall get one that will be very agreeable to you.

I accepted of Melendez's offer with the more joy, as my finances were every day diminishing. However, I was not long a burthen to him. When I had staid with him eight days, he informed me that he had just been recommending me to a gentleman of his acquaintance, who had occasion for a valet de chambre, and he thought he would take me. The gentleman coming in at that time, Signior, said Melendez, letting him see me, this is the young man I told you of. He is a youth, for whose honesty and sobriety I will answer. The gentleman looked attentively at me, and said he was pleased with my countenance, and that he would hire me for his valet. Come along with me, added he, and I will let you see what you will have to do. So bidding the merchant good morrow, he conducted me

me to the broad street near St. Philip's church. We entered a pretty genteel house, of which he possessed one wing. We ascended a stair-case of six steps, and came to a room which had two doors, one within another; the first had a small lattice window. We went through that room into another, where was a bed and other furniture, rather neat than rich.

As my new master had attentively considered me at Melendez's, so did I also in my turn examine him. He was a man of about fifty years of age, had a serious reserved look, though there was good-nature in it withal; and his temper was agreeable to his aspect. He questioned me a good deal about my family. And being satisfied with the account I gave him of myself; Gil Blas, says he, I take thee to be a sensible young man, and am pleased I have met with thee: thou shalt have no reason to complain. I will give thee six reals a-day for thy board and wages, besides the vails you will get in my service. I am easily pleased. I do not eat at home. All that thou wilt have to do, will be, to brush my cloaths in the morning, dress me, and the rest of the day you may do what you please; only take care to come back early in the evening, and stay for me at the door. I demand no more of thee. Having thus informed me of my business, he took six reals out of his pocket, and gave me for the use already mentioned. After which we went out of the house again, he locked the doors himself, and put the keys in his pocket. Friend, says he, do not follow me. Go where you

chuse; but take care to be on the stairs when I return at night. Saying this, he left me to make what use I thought proper of the remainder of the day.

Gil Blas, says I to myself, thou hast got a good master indeed. Six reals a day for brushing his cloaths, and dressing him in the morning, and the remainder of the time to do what thou thinkest proper. This is certainly the easiest place that ever man had. No wonder I had so great a desire to be at Madrid. My excellent genius put me on it. I cannot be more happy in my circumstances. I spent the day in walking up and down the city, admiring every thing that was new to me, and that was not little. I supped at an eating-house in our neighbourhood in the evening; and then repaired to the place appointed for me to stay for him. Three quarters of an hour after I had been there he came, and appeared well pleased that I had been so exact. It is very well, says he; I like that servants should be punctual. At these words, he opened the doors of his apartment, and afterwards locked them upon us. As it was dark, he struck a light with his tinder-box, and lighted a candle. I then assisted him in undressing. When he was in bed, I put a candle on his chimney as he ordered me, and carried the other into the antichamber, where I was to lie in a bed without curtains. He rose the next morning between nine and ten. And when I had brushed his cloaths, he gave me six reals more, and sent me away till night. I perceived when he went out, that

that he took great care to lock his doors; and so we did not see one another again till the evening.

After such a manner did we live, which I thought very agreeable. But the best of all was, I did not know my master's name. Melendez was ignorant of it himself, he being no further acquainted with him, than that he was accustomed to come to his shop, and purchase linen of him. I could not be any better informed by our neighbours. They all let me know that they were not acquainted with my master, though he had had those lodgings two years; that he kept company with nobody in the neighbourhood; and some of them, who were apt to judge rashly, concluded from thence, that he certainly was not so good as he should be. They went still farther, they imagined him to be one of the king of Portugal's spies; and advised me to take care of myself. I was greatly disturbed at what they said, fancying that it might be true, and I should run the hazard of visiting the prison at Madrid. Though I was perfectly innocent, I could not avoid being timorous, my past misfortunes having taught me to fear justice. For I had found by experience, that if she did not punish the innocent, she had at least no respect to the laws of hospitality; and that it was always a terrible thing to fall into her hands.

On so nice an occasion, I went to consult with Melendez, who did not know what to advise me to do. Though he did not imagine my master to be a spy, yet he did not know what to

make of him else. I determined to watch him, and if I found that he was an enemy to the state, to leave him. But I thought the easiness of my place required me to be very certain of it. For this intent I narrowly observed all his actions; and to sound him, said to him one night when I was undressing him, I know not how a man can live so as to avoid slander. This is at wicked world, and some of our neighbours are as bad as any in it; they deal solely in scandal. You cannot think how they speak of us. Well, Gil Blas, replied he, but, child, what can they say of us? Scandal, answered I, never wants matter. Virtue itself is often sacrificed to its purpose. Our neighbours say we are dangerous people; that the court should look after us. In short, Sir, they imagine that you are one of the king of Portugal's spies. Saying this, I viewed my master as Alexander did his physician, and using all my penetration to see what an effect my report produced on him, I imagined I perceived some alterations in him, which agreed too well with our neighbours' conjectures. He seemed very pensive: but soon recovering himself, said, with a great deal of tranquillity, Gil Blas, never mind what our neighbours say; it is not worth our while troubling ourselves about them. They may judge of us as they think proper, so long as we have given them no reason for it.

He added no more, but went to bed, and I followed his example, not knowing what to make of him. The next day, as we were making ready

dy to go out, we heard a great rapping at the door. My master opened the innermost, and looking through the lattice, perceived a well dressed man, who thus spoke to him. Signior, I am an Alguazil, and am come to inform you that Monsieur the corregidor would chuse to speak with you. What would he have with me? replied my patron. The alguazil answered, he did not know, you will soon be informed of it. I am his humble servant, replied my master; but have nothing to do with him. Saying this, he shut the second door hastily upon him, as if he was not very well pleased with what the alguazil said. He gave me six reals, saying, Gil Blas, my friend, thou mayest go out. I do not intend going abroad so early, and have no further occasion for you this morning. This made me imagine that he was afraid of being apprehended, and staid at home, to avoid it. I left him; and to satisfy myself in the matter, secreted myself in a place where I could perceive him when he went out. I was determined not to stir till I saw what would come of it; and about an hour after saw him come out with an air of assurance, that perplexed my suspicions, but did not cure me of them; for I had no favourable opinion of him. I thought that his looks were artificial; that he stopt behind to carry off his gold and jewels, and was perhaps going to save himself by immediate flight. I did not expect to see him again, and was doubtful whether I should go to stay for him at night; but I changed my mind, and repaired to my post at

the appointed time. I was not a little amazed to see him return. He went to bed without appearing the least uneasy, and rose with the same composure of mind the next day.

While he was dressing himself, we were disturbed with a rapping at the door, as it was the day before. My master looked through the lattice, and saw the alguazil was there again, and asked what he wanted? Open the door, answered the alguazil, it is Monsieur the corregidor. My blood froze in my veins at so awful a name; for I was confoundedly afraid of those gentry ever since I had been in their hands, and would willingly have been an hundred leagues from Madrid. As for my master, he was not afraid. He opened the door, and received the corregidor with respect. You see, Sir, says the corregidor, I am not come with my attendants along with me; I want to do ever thing in as quiet a manner as possible. Notwithstanding the bad reports that pass on you in the city, I think there is so much due you, that you have the appearance of a gentleman. Tell me your name then, Sir, and what you are doing at Madrid? Signior, replied my master, my name is Don Bernard de Castel Blazo, and I am a native of New Castile. With respect to my business, I entertain myself with seeing plays, walking and amusing myself daily with the company of some agreeable people. You have a great income, no doubt, says the corregidor. No, Sir, replied my master, I have no income at all, nor houses, nor land. How do you live then? replied

plied the corregidor. I will let you see, says my master. At these words he lifted up a hanging, opened a door that I had not perceived before, and after that another within it, which led to a closet, where was a large chest full of pieces of gold. He bid the judge satisfy himself, and proceeded in this manner.

Signior, you know that the Spaniards are not fond of work: and I believe of all the Spaniards in the world, I am the least fond of it. I am so indolent, that it renders me incapable of being fit for any employment. If I would change my vices into virtues, I might stile that laziness a philosophical indolence; that it was the work of a mind taken off from things which are most pursued by men. But I must freely own to you that I am constitutionally lazy, that if I was obliged to work for my maintenance, I should starve. That I might live therefore agreeable to my fancy, and save the plague of a steward, I converted all my estate, consisting of several considerable inheritances, into money. That money in this chest, amounting to about fifty thousand ducats, will be more than I will have occasion for, were I to live till I was a hundred years of age, being now sixty; and I do not spend above a thousand a year. I am not at all anxious for what is to happen, because, thank God, I am no ways addicted to any of the three things that ruin men for the most part. I am not fond of either feasting or gaming, and am quite done with the fair sex. I am not afraid of being ranked among those old dotards, who are

over fond of the sex when the season is past, and shall never be at any expence to purchase their favours.

You are a happy man, says the corregidor. You are very unjustly suspected of being a spy; it being by no means suitable to a man of your temper. Continue in your way, Don Bernard, says he; and instead of disturbing you I will hereafter be your defender, and desire the favour of your friendship, and in return I offer you mine. Signior, said my master, I accept of so obliging a proposal with joy and respect. You add to my wealth, and make my happiness complete, by giving me your friendship. The alguazil and I heard this discourse in the next room. Don Bernard could not enough express his gratitude for the extraordinary civilities of the corregidor; and my master's example put me upon exerting myself to do honour to the alguazil. I made him a hundred profound bows; though I had that disdain and aversion for him at the bottom, which every man of honour generally has for one of his profession.



CH A P. II.

How Gil Blas was surprized by meeting Captain Rolando at Madrid: and the many curious Things which that Robber related to him.

DON Bernard de Castel Blazo having accompanied the corregidor to the street, instantly

instantly returned to see that his box was locked, and his doors well fastened. Then we went out, better satisfied than we were before, Don Bernard having the corregidor for his friend, and I being sure of my six reals a-day. I determined to go and inform Melendez of the adventure; and when I was near his house, saw Captain Rolando. I was in a terrible surprize, and could not avoid shivering at the sight of him. He knew me again, came very gravely up to me, and still preserving his air of superiority, bid me follow him. I trembled all the while, and in my fright obeyed him. He will no doubt, said I to myself, make me pay what I owe him; whether will he carry me? perhaps there may be some subterranean abode also in this city. Deuce take it, if I was certain of it, I would let him see that I have not got the gout in my feet. I went behind him, looking particularly at what place he stopped, determining if I did not like it, to run for it.

My fears were soon banished, by Rolando's entering a genteel tavern. I followed him. He asked for the best wine, and told the landlord to prepare dinner. While dinner was making ready, Captain Rolando began his discourse to me, in this manner. Gil Blas, thou mayest well be amazed, to meet thy old commander here; and thou wilt be still more so, when thou hearest what I am going to inform thee. The day I left thee in our subterranean habitation, while I and my companions went to Manfilla, to dispose of the horses and mules we had taken the

day before, we met the corregidor of Leon's son in his coach, accompanied by four men on horseback, well armed. Two of them we made an end off, the other two took themselves to flight. The coachman, afraid of his master's life, in a suppliant voice, cried, Gentlemen, for God's sake do not murder the only son of the corregidor of Leon. My comrades, instead of relenting at these words, were more furiously enraged against the corregidor's son. Do not let the son of our mortal enemy escape, says one of my comrades. How many of our profession has his father passed sentence on! Let us be revenged, and sacrifice this victim to their manes. The rest of my comrades approved of his speech; and my lieutenant was making ready to act the part of the high priest in the sacrifice, when I stopped him, saying, Hold, why should we spill blood unnecessarily? Let us be satisfied with this young man's purse, since he makes no resistance. It would be cruel to put him to death. Besides, he is not answerable for his father's actions: and his father does but his duty in passing sentence on us, as we do ours, when we ease travellers of their burthens.

In this manner did I intercede for the corregidor's son; and it was not ineffectual; we took nothing but the money he had, and carried the two dead men's horses off with us, which we disposed of with the rest at Mansilla. Afterwards, we returned to our cavern, which we reached a little before it was light the next day. We were greatly amazed to find the trap-door
lifted

lifted up; and our amazement was still greater, when we saw Leonora fastened to a table. She briefly informed us of what had happened. We were surprized how thou couldst deceive us. We did not imagine that thou wert capable of playing us such a trick; and we pardoned thee on account of thy contrivance. We untied Leonora, and bid her get us something good for to eat; while I and my companions went to look after our horses. We found the old negro, who had eat nothing for four and twenty hours, just a-dying. We would willingly have saved him, had it been in our power: but he was too far gone, and otherwise seemed so near his end, that we left the poor devil as we found him. This did not deprive us of an appetite for our breakfast; after which, being satisfied, we slept away the remainder of the day. When we awoke, Leonora acquainted us that Domingo was dead; so we carried him into the cellar, where thou mayest remember thou usedst to lie, and interred him as formally as if he had had the honour of being one of our comrades.

A few days after, as we were making an incursion, we met three troops of St. Hermandad's officers at the entrance of the woods. As we saw no more than one troop at first, we despised them, though they were far more numerous than us. We attacked them; and while we were engaged, the other two, which had kept themselves hitherto concealed, bore down upon us so warmly, that our courage was of no service to

us. On this occasion our lieutenant and other two of my comrades were slain. The two that remained and myself were overpowered and taken. Two of the troops conducted us to Leon: while the other went and ruined our retreat, which was discovered in this manner: A peasant of Lucena crossing the forest in his return home, by chance saw our trap-door lifted up, the very day that thou escapedst with the lady. He thought that it was our habitation, but had not resolution to go in; he satisfied himself with observing the place, and made those remarks by which he might find it again. He cut off some of the bark of the neighbouring trees as he went along, until he had got quite out of the wood. He then repaired to Leon to inform the corregidor of it, who was the better pleased with it, as his son had lately been robbed by our company. He immediately assembled those three troops of St. Hermandad's officers to take us, and the peasant was their guide.

I was a show for the inhabitants of Leon, on my arrival in that city. The people could not have been more desirous of seeing me, had I been a Portuguese general, taken prisoner of war and brought thither. Behold the noted captain! said they, who struck the whole country with terror; he and his two companions deserve to be put to the most cruel death. We were taken before the corregidor, who began to insult me. Heaven, wearied out with the disorders of thy life, says he, has at last given such a rascal into my hands. My Lord, replied I, if my crimes
are

are manifold, you cannot reproach me with the death of your only son. I preserved his life: you must be a little favourable to me on that account. Knave, replied he, men are not obliged to act generously to such rascals as thou art, and if I had a desire to save you, the duty of my office would not suffer me. Having said this, he caused us to be imprisoned in a dungeon, where my companions did not linger long; for they were taken out at the end of three days to act their last tragical scene in the market-place. As for me, I was kept three whole weeks in the dungeon, thinking that my execution was put off only to make it the more terrible; and I expected a new kind of death: but the corregidor then ordering me to be brought before him, said, Harken to thy sentence; thou art free. My only son would have been killed, had it not been for thee: as a father, I cannot in gratitude but acknowledge that piece of service: being a judge, I had it not in my power to pardon thee, but I wrote to court in thy behalf. I have obtained a pardon for thee, and thou mayest go where thou thinkest proper: but, added he, take my advice, beware of offending again. Let this happy event teach thee to quit thy wicked course of life. I was much affected with what he said, and set out for Madrid, resolving to follow his advice, and live in an honest manner in that city. I found my father and mother both dead, and their estates in possession of an old relation, who gave me such an account of it as relations commonly do. I have been able to get no more
than

than three thousand ducats, which likely was not a fourth part of what was my due. But in that case what could I do? I would have gained nothing by a law suit; so I accepted of it, and to avoid idleness purchased an alguazil's place. My brethren would, out of decorum, have been against admitting me, had they been acquainted with my history; but luckily they were either ignorant of it, or pretended to be so, which was all one. Indeed, in this respectable society it is every one's interest to conceal his actions as well as he can. Heaven be praised, on that score we have nothing to reproach one another with: the devil take the best. Yet, friend, continues Rolando, to open my mind to thee, I am not at all fond of my profession. It requires a behaviour too mysterious and tricking for me. Here one can only commit secret and crafty rogueries. I liked my old trade far better. My new one indeed is safer, but the former is more agreeable, and I am fond of liberty. I am inclined to dispose of my place, and go to the mountains at the source of the river Tagus. I know there is a band of Catalans, who are the bravest fellows in the world, that have a secure retreat there. If you will go with me, we will increase their company. I shall be captain's second; and will assure them, for thy better reception, that I have seen thee often engaged by my side. I will extol thy valour in a surprising manner. I will praise thee more than a general does an officer whom he wants to have promoted. I will not mention the trick thou put
upon.

upon us, lest they should suspect thee. Well, says he, wilt thou go along with me? I wait for thy answer.

Every one is inclined a different way, replied I: you are born for hardy deeds, and I for an easy quiet life. I understand you, said he: you are still, I suppose, in love with the lady whom you rescued from us, and no doubt you lead an easy life with her here at Madrid. Own, Gil Blas, that you stay with her here; and live on the pistoles that you took from our cave. I told him that he was in a mistake; and would relate him the history of that lady while we were at dinner, and all that happened to me since I had left the company. After we had dined, he resumed his discourse of the Catalans. He confessed that he was determined to join them, and again persuaded me to go with him: but seeing that I was against it, he gave me a fierce look, and said in a furious manner, Since thou hast such a mean soul as to prefer thy slavish condition to the honour of being admitted into the company of men of courage, I leave thee to the lowness of thy spirit. But listen to what I say to thee, and always remember it. Forget what thou hast heard from me to-day, don't speak of me to any body. If I understand that thou dost so much as mention me in conversation—Thou knowest me, and that is sufficient. So saying, he called for the bill, discharged it, and we departed.

C H A P. III.

Don Bernard de Castel Blazo dismisses him from his Service. He enters into that of a Beau.

MY master was passing by when we were coming out of the tavern, and taking leave of one another. He perceived me, and I saw that he more than once cast his eye upon the captain. I supposed that he was amazed to find me with such a kind of a man; for his very appearance was enough to let one into his character. He was tall, long visaged, and although he was not a bad looking man, yet he had the air of a rogue, and something in his face that was shocking.

I was not mistaken in my conjectures. I found in the evening that Don Bernard's head was full of the captain, and that he was disposed to believe every thing I knew of him, if I durst inform him. Gil Blas, says he, what tall man was that I saw thee with to-day? An alguazil, Sir, said I; imagining that would be enough to content him. But he asked me several other questions about him; and seeing me rather perplexed, which was owing to Rolando's threats, that were fresh in my memory, he said no more, but went to bed. Next morning when I had dressed him as usual, instead of six reals, he gave me six ducats, saying, Friend, I give thee that for this day's service. Go, and seek for another matter. I will not have a servant that

that keeps such company. In my justification I answered, that my acquaintance with the alguazil was occasioned by my having attended him when I prescribed at Valladolid. Very well, replied my master, that is a very fine excuse; but you should have made it last night. I thought it would be wrong for me to do it then, I said, and that was the reason of my confusion. Yes, yes, replied my master, you were very prudent indeed; I did not imagine that you had been so cunning, cried he, clapping my shoulders gently: Go, child, I will have nothing more to say to thee.

Immediately I went to let Melendez know this bad news. He heard me, and said, don't mind; I will get thee a better place. And accordingly a few days after he told me that he had procured me the best place in Madrid.

Gil Blas, said he, thou little imaginest that thou art going to be so happy as I shall make thee. I have recommended thee to Don Matthias de Silva, a man of the first rank, one of those young gentlemen who go under the name of beaus. I have the honour to serve him with whatever he wants in the mercery or drapery way. It is true, indeed, he purchases silks and linens from me upon trust; but we never lose by gentlemen of his rank in the end. They marry rich heiresses or widows, who pay what they are owing, and even if that should not happen, we charge their goods in such a manner, that if we have one part in four, we are pretty well off. Don Matthias's steward is

my

my intimate friend. We will go to him : he will present you to his master ; and you may be assured that, upon my account, he will treat you well.

As we were going to Don Matthias's, Melendez said to me, I think it would not be amiss if you were to know the character of the steward. His name is Gregorio Rodriguez. Between you and me, he was not worth a farthing, when he first came into business ; but, finding he had a genius for it, he followed it, and has made a fortune out of two families, in which he has served as a steward. I assure you he is very vain, and will have the other servants respect him. When they have the least favour to ask of their master, they must first address themselves to him ; for should they obtain it, without his interest, he will always find some means or other, to prevent its taking effect.

Therefore, Gil Blas, mind this rule, and never neglect paying even more court to him, than to his master. Use all means to get into his favour. His friendship will be of great service to you. He will be punctual in paying you your wages, and do something more for you. If you obtain his favour, he may now and then allow you a little bone to pick, while he possesses the great ones himself. He does what he thinks proper. Don Matthias minds nothing but his pleasures, and would not inform himself of the condition of his own affairs for the world. What a fine house is that for a steward !

When we arrived at the house, we enquired
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for Signior Rodriguez, and were informed that he was in his own apartment. He was there, with a kind of a farmer, with a bag full of pistoles. The steward, who seemed to be of a more fallow complexion than a girl worn out with celibacy, advanced with open arms towards Melendez. Melendez opened his in the same manner, and they embraced each other with demonstrations of joy, in which at least there was as much art as nature. Their salutations being over, they talked of me. Rodriguez having narrowly examined me, very politely said, I was just such a one as Don Matthias wanted, and that he would present me to him, with pleasure. Upon this, Melendez informed him what a regard he had for me; desiring the steward to take me into his care. After which he left us together: and as soon as he went away, Rodriguez says, I will introduce you to my master, as soon as I have done with this honest farmer: then taking a bag, said, Talego, let us see if the money be exact. He counted out five hundred pistoles, and said, it will do, the sum is right. Upon which he gave him a receipt, and sent him away. He put the pistoles into a bag again. Then addressing himself to me, said, Now we will go to the levee of my master. He for the most part rises about mid-day. It is an hour past, and I fancy he is risen.

As the steward said, we found him in his morning-gown, lolling in an easy-chair, one of his legs over one arm of it, and his head over the other, and his nose full of snuff. He was talking
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ing with a footman, who did the duty of a valet. My lord, says the steward, I take the freedom to present to you a young man in place of him you dismissed the day before yesterday : he is recommended by Melendez your draper, who assures me that he is a lad of merit, and I think you will be pleased with him. It is sufficient, says the young lord, that you introduce him to me. I take him into my service. He shall be my valet de chambre. That affair, Rodriguez, added he, is settled. I have something else to tell you. You are come very importunately, for I was just going to send for you. Dear Rodriguez, I have bad news to tell you ; I had not good luck last night. Besides the hundred pistoles I had of you, I lost two hundred upon honour. You are sensible of what importance it is for persons of quality to discharge such a debt. It is indeed the only sort which we are obliged in point of honour to pay. We are not much concerned for the rest. You must get me therefore, as soon as possible, two hundred pistoles, and send them to the Countess of Pedrosa. Sir, says the steward, it is easier said than done. Where shall I find such a sum to please you ? Tho' I threaten your tenants hard, they do not bring me a farthing, your family must be maintained in a genteel manner. My thoughts are continually racked to find wherewithal to answer the expence. I have hitherto made a shift to do it, but it will be a miracle if I hold out much longer. It don't signify what you say, cried Don Matthias interrupting him, you only vex me

me with your reflections. Do not imagine, Rodriguez, that I will alter my way of living, or look after my estate: a fine amusement for a man of pleasure like me! Indeed, Sir, replied the steward, as matters go, I foresee that in a very short time that care will be taken off your hands. You tire my life out, says the young lord a little hastily; let me ruin myself without being aware of it. I tell you that you must procure me two hundred pistoles. I will then go again to the little old man of whom you have already borrowed money at a great interest, says Rodriguez. I do not care to whom you have recourse, says the young lord, provided I have the money. You may go to the devil for it, if you will.

Saying these words in a hasty and angry manner, the steward went out, and a young person of family came in, whose name was Don Antonio Centelles. What is the matter, friend, says the latter to my master, you appear not to be in a very good humour? Who has been the occasion of it? I will lay a wager it was the person I met as I was coming in. Yes, said Don Matthias. I have such another troublesome steward, replied Don Antonio. When the rascal, after my repeated orders, brings money for me, one would imagine it was his own. He is full of his advice. Sir, says he, you will ruin yourself. Your rents are seized. I am obliged to interrupt him, and put an end to his discourse. The loss is, says Don Matthias, we cannot do without these sort of people; they are necessary evils. They are so, says Centelles. But hark, says

says he, there is one of the most comical thoughts come into my head that can be imagined. With that he burst into a fit of laughter; and then proceeded: Nothing can be better managed. We will change these serious scenes into comic, and amuse ourselves with what has so much perplexed us. It is this; I will ask your steward for as much money as I stand in need of, and you may do the same by mine. Let them moralize as much as they think proper, we shall hear them with indifference. Your steward shall bring me his accounts, and my steward shall do the same by you. You will be informed of nothing but my profusion, and I of nothing but yours. It will be fine sport, won't it?

They both diverted themselves with the thoughts of it, and were laughing at it, when their mirth was interrupted by the steward, who returned with a little old man, almost quite bald. Don Antonio would have withdrawn. Farewell, Don Matthias, says he, by and by we shall see one another again. I leave you with these gentlemen. You have, no doubt, some business of importance together. No, no, said my master, stay, this is a discreet old person, who lends me money at twenty per cent. How, twenty per cent! says Centelles amazed. You deal with honest people than I do; I am obliged to give far more for every pistole that I borrow: forty per cent. is the common thing I pay. Imposition! says the old usurer. What knaves they are! Do they not imagine that there

is another world? I am not amazed that usury is so much railed at. Our honour and reputation are ruined by the exorbitant profit that some exact. We would not be reviled so much, if all my brethren were like me. I for the most part only lend money to oblige my neighbours. Ah! if times were now as they formerly have been, I would lend you money without interest; and notwithstanding they are now so bad, my conscience will scarcely allow me to take even twenty per cent. But they say there is no silver in the mines, that the bowels of the earth are exhausted of it; and its scarcity makes me inroach upon morality.

How much have you occasion for? added he, addressing himself to my master. Two hundred pistoles, replied Don Matthias. Here are four hundred in a bag, says the usurer, you may have one half of them. Saying this, he pulled a bag from under his coat, which appeared to be the very same one in which the farmer brought the five hundred pistoles to the steward. I immediately knew what was the meaning of it, and soon after found that Melendez had not told me a lie, when he praised the steward's understanding. The old man put the pistoles on the table, the sight of which so inflamed my master, that he had a great desire to have the whole sum. Signior Descomulgado, says he to the usurer, I have thought better of it, I find I have been in the wrong; I asked to borrow only what I was owing, without considering that I had not a single pistole in my purse. Rather than have recourse

course to you again to-morrow I will take the whole four hundred pistoles. designed, replied the usurer, to let a clergyman have part of the money, who has put some young women into a nunnery, and is about furnishing their lodgings for them; but since you stand in need of it all, you may have it: all that you have to do is to give me good security. As for security, says Rodriguez interrupting him, and taking a paper out of his pocket, you shall have very good. Here is a bill for five hundred pistoles upon Talego, a rich farmer of Mondejan, Signior Don Matthias need only sign it. Very well, replied the usurer, I am not hard to please. Then the steward gave my master a pen, who signed it, without reading it, whistling all the while he was writing.

This business being done, the old man took leave of my master; Don Matthias ran and embraced him, saying, Till we meet again, Signior Descomulgado, I am wholly yours. I cannot imagine why usurers should be used like rogues. I think you are men very proper for society. You are the comfort of many heirs, and the resort of all the lords who exceed their income with their expences. Very true, says Centelles, usurers are honest people, they cannot be too much honoured. Let me also embrace this worthy man, on account of his twenty per cent. So saying, he came to the old man to hug him, and these two beaux by way of diversion drove him from one to another, as they strike a ball at tennis. After they had done with him, they let

let him go with the steward, who deserved their embraces as much as he.

As soon as they were gone, Don Matthias sent by the servant that was in the room with me the two hundred pistoles to the Countess of Pedrosa. He put the other two hundred pistoles into a green silk purse, which he for the most part carried about with him. Very well contented to see himself so well provided with cash, he with a great deal of gaiety asked Don Antonio, What shall we do to-day? Let us consult. You speak like a sensible man, says Centelles, let us think about it. While they were considering, two other lords came into the room, Don Fernand de Gamboa, and Don Alexio Segiar, both of them much about the same age with my master, who was near twenty-nine years old. These four gentlemen hugged each other as heartily as if they had not been together for ten years. After which Don Fernand, who was a jovial companion, said, addressing himself to my master, Where do you design to dine to-day? If you be not engaged, I will take you to a tavern, where you shall drink nectar: I was there last night, and did not leave it till between five and six this morning. I wish I had been there also, cried my master, and then I should not have lost my money.

As for me, said Centelles, I invented a new amusement last night. I am fond of alteration in my pleasures; nothing but variety can make life agreeable. One of my acquaintance took me to the house of a custom-house-officer, one of

those gentlemen who do their own and the state's business together. Every thing was elegant, and the entertainment was genteel enough : but the master of the house had something very ridiculous in his behaviour. Though he was sprung from parents of a very low condition, yet he pretended mightily to quality, and his wife, though she was very ugly, to beauty. They both had the Biscayen accent, which caused the silly things they said to appear still more foolish. Besides, there were five or six children, with their preceptor, at table ; so you may imagine what their breeding was.

I, says Don Alexio Segiar, supped with the actresses Arsenia. We were six in number ; Arsenia, Florimonda, with a coquet, a friend of hers, Don Juan de Moncada, the Marquis de Zeneta, and your humble servant. We passed the night in a very jovial manner. How happy was I ! It is true, Florimonda and Arsenia have not over much wit, but then they are very wanton, which makes them as agreeable as witty. They are brisk romping wenches, and I am a thousand times sonder of them than your precise prim dames, who think so much of themselves, on account of their virtue and sense.

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C H A P. IV.

How Gil Blas became acquainted with the Gentlemen's Servants. A wonderful Secret they imparted to him, to gain the Reputation of a Man of Wit. and the particular Oath they obliged him to take.

IN this way did these lords amuse themselves, till Don Matthias, whom I was assisting to dress, was ready to go out with them. He then ordered me to follow him ; and all the rakes together set out for the tavern recommended to them by Don Fernand de Gamboa. I walked behind them with three other servants, for each of them had one. I perceived that every one of these valets imitated his master, and took the same airs upon himself. I saluted them as their new companion, and they returned the civility. One of them having observed me some time, said, I see, brother, by your air, that you have never served a young lord. No, answered I, I have not been long in Madrid. So I imagined, said he, you have still a country look ; you appear timorous and awkward, and are very stiff in your manners ; but it does not signify, we will soon improve you. You flatter me, said I. No, no, replied he, we can improve the most stupid fellow that ever was. Take my word for it, we will make you pass.

There was no occasion to say any more, to make me understand that I had a parcel of fine fellows for my brother servants, and that I could

not have got into better hands to have become proficient in my trade. When we arrived at the tavern, we found an entertainment made ready for them, which had been ordered in the morning by Signior Don Fernand. Our masters seated themselves, and we waited on them. All the time they were at dinner, they were very agreeable, and I took great pleasure in hearing their conversation. Their thoughts, characters, and expressions amused me. What fire, what sallies! They appeared to be a new sort of men. After the dessert, we placed a number of bottles of the most excellent wines on the table; and left them, to go to dinner ourselves in a room where the cloth was laid on purpose for us.

I soon perceived that the gentlemen of my fraternity had more merit than I at first thought. They were not satisfied with taking upon themselves the manners of their masters, they imitated their language also; and these fellows succeeded so well, that there was no difference, their quality air excepted. Their deportment was free and easy; I was delighted with their wit, and desponded of ever becoming as agreeable as them. Don Fernand's servant had the management of the feast, because his master treated the others: and that nothing might be wanting, called the landlord, and said, Master Andrew Mantua, let us have ten bottles of your best wine; and, as you are accustomed to do, place them down in our master's accompt. Very well, replied the host; but Master Gaspard, continued he, you know Signior Don Fernand already

already owes me a good deal, and if with your assistance I could get a little cash——— Oh! Sir, interrupted the valet, do not be uneasy about that; I will answer for him. My master's debts are as good as old gold. It is true indeed some ill natured creditors have seized our rents, but in a little time we intend selling our estates, and so pay off every thing, without examining the particulars of your bill. The landlord brought the wine, notwithstanding the rents were seized, and we drank it in the hopes of the replevy. We toasted one another's healths, by the surnames of our masters. Don Fernand's servant called Antonio's Centelles, and Don Antonio's called Don Fernand's Gamboa. They named me Silva; and by degrees we got as drunk under these borrowed names, as the lords to whom they belonged.

Though I did not cut such a figure as my comrades, yet they seemed to be very well pleased with me. Silva, said one of the archest among them, we shall make something of thee; I perceive that thou hast a genius at bottom, but dost not understand how to use it properly. The fear of blundering prevents thee from speaking any thing at hazard; and I must inform thee, that men now a-days gain the name of wits by speaking whatever comes uppermost. If you chuse to shine, give your vivacity its sway, and speak every thing that enters into your head. Thy nonsense will pass for a noble boldness. If thou canst but utter one witticism among a hundred impertinences, the silly things thou

sayest will not be minded, and thou wilt be reckoned a man of merit. This is what our masters practise with such success, and so every person should do that wants to be reputed a wit.

Besides being already very desirous of passing for a fine genius, the secret which he had informed me to succeed in it seemed so easy to me, that I was determined not to neglect it. I immediately put it in practice, and the wine that I had drank made it succeed; that is, I spoke whatever came uppermost, and had the good luck amongst many absurdities to throw out some sallies of wit, which were much applauded. This essay filled me with confidence; I collected all my vivacity to produce some lively sally; and chance so much befriended me, that my efforts were not unsuccessful.

Well, says one of my comrades, who had spoke to me in the street, don't you begin to mend? You have not been with us more than two hours, and you are already another man. You will improve every day more and more. This is to serve persons of quality: it elevates the mind; citizens' places do not do so. I believe it, answered I, and I will henceforth dedicate my services to the nobility. That's well said, cried Don Fernand's valet, near drunk; it does not belong to citizens to have such superior geniuses as we have. Gentlemen, let us swear by the river Styx, never to serve such fellows. We all laughed at Caspard's saying, and approved of it, every one taking the oath with his glass in his hand.

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We did not get up from table till our masters thought proper to retire, which was about twelve at night, and my comrades thought they were grown very sober, to retire so soon. But indeed these young lords only retired from the tavern to visit a noted coquet, who lived in the court quarter, whose house was constantly open to men of pleasure. She was above thirty five years of age, and was very handsome, and so agreeable in company, that it is reported she sold the remains of her beauty at a higher price than she did the first fruits. She had always two or three coquets of the first rank with her, which attracted a great number of lords to her house. They amused themselves in the afternoon, then supped and passed the night in drinking and making merry. Our masters remained there till morning, and so did we, without being wearied; for while they amused themselves with the mistresses, we diverted ourselves with the maids. At last we separated at day-break, and went each to his own home.

My master, as usual, rose about noon, dressed himself, and went out. I accompanied him to Don Antonio Centelles's house, where we found one Don Alvaro de Acunha, an old debauchee. All the young gentlemen who wanted to make themselves agreeable put themselves under his care. He formed them for pleasure, and taught them to make a figure in the world, and spend their estates. He was not afraid of squandering his own, that being done long ago. After these gentlemen had saluted one another, Centelles said to my

master, Faith, Don Matthias, thou couldst not come here at a more proper time. Alvaro is going to take me to dine with a citizen who to-day treats the Marquis de Zeneta and Don Juan de Moncada. Thou shalt be of the party. What is the citizen's name? says Don Matthias. Gregorio de Noriego, answers Don Alvaro, and in two words I will give you this young man's character. His father, who is a wealthy jeweller, is gone abroad to trade in jewels, and when he set out, left a very good income with him. Gregorio is a silly fellow, who has a towardly disposition to spend his estate, and, in spite of nature, sets up for a wit and a beau. He has desired me to teach him, and I can assure you, gentlemen, I have put him in a fair way. His income is already pretty well exhausted. It is very probable, says Centelles. Methinks I see him already in an alms house. Come, Don Matthias, added he, let us get acquainted with him, and help to ruin him. With all my heart, replied Matthias. I like to see those mechanic gentry reduced, who pretend to our airs and manners. Nothing, for instance, ever gave me so much pleasure as when the collector's son was ruined by vanity and gaming, in making a figure like a lord, so that he was obliged even to dispose of his house that he lived in. As for him, says Antonio, he deserves no compassion; he is as foppish in his adversity as he was in his prosperity.

Centelles and my master went along with Don Alvaro to Gregorio Noriega's. Magicon and I accompanied them, both of us delighted to find that

that we were like to come in for snips, and help to ruin the citizen. When we came there, we saw a good many men busy preparing dinner. The fumes of the ragouts were most delicious odours to us. The Marquis de Zenata and Don Juan de Moncada were just come. The master of the house seemed to be as great a booby as what Don Alvaro had described. He in vain attempted to take upon him the airs of a beau. He was a miserable copy of so excellent an original; or rather a simpleton, that would willingly have passed himself for a sensible man. Represent to yourself a man of this character among five rakes, rallying him, and each of them striving to run him to an insupportable expence. Gentlemen, says Don Alvaro, after the first compliments were over, I present to you Signior Gregorio de Noriega, for an accomplished gentleman. He has a number of good qualities. Do you know how he has improved himself? Put him to the tryal: he is equally proficient in all subjects, from the closest logic to orthography. You honour me too much, says the citizen interrupting him with a foolish smile. But, gentlemen, with justice one may say, that Signior Gregorio cannot fail of gaining repute in the world. As for me, says Don Antonio, what I like him best for, and value far above his orthography, is the judicious choice he makes of the company he keeps. In place of confining himself with the conversation of the citizens, he talks with none but young lords, not minding the expence that attends it. This discovers a nobleness of soul,

and that he knows how to spend his fortune, with judgment and taste.

These ironical speeches were succeeded by a thousand of the same kind. They all fell upon poor Gregorio, and he was so foolish that he could not see it. On the contrary, he thought every thing was meant as it was said, and was quite delighted with his guests. He even thought that they honoured him, by turning him into ridicule. In short they made a game of him all the time they were at dinner. They stayed all day and night too. We drank what we thought proper, as well as our masters, and were all when we left him in a fine condition.



CHAP. V.

Gil Blas sets up for a Man of Gallantry, and gets acquainted with a pretty Girl.

AFTER having slept some hours, I rose in good humour, not forgetting the advice I had got from Melendez. I went before my master was up to pay my respects to the steward, who seemed to be very well pleased with the regard I paid him. He asked me how this way of living agreed with me; I answered, it was new to me, but I was not afraid of familiarizing myself with it; which indeed I effectually did, and in a very short time too. I altered

ed my humour, and from grave turned frolicksome. Don Antonio's valet complimented me upon my metamorphosis, and informed me that I stood in need of nothing now to make me a compleat cavalier, but an intrigue, which was quite requisite in rendering a pretty fellow entirely polite; that all our companions were beloved by some fair lady, and that for his part, he was in the possession of the good graces of two young ladies of quality. I imagined the fellow lied. Monsieur Magicon, says I, to be sure you are a pretty fellow, but I cannot think how women of any rank can fall in love with a man of your state. Oh! as for that, said he, they do not know who I am. I make all my conquests in my master's cloaths, and even with his name; as thus, I dress myself like a young nobleman, assume the manners of one, and go to the public places; I ogle all the women I meet, till I find one that encourages me. I pursue her, and get into conversation with her. I call myself Don Antonio Centelles, and demand an appointment; upon which the lady seems coy, I urge her, she complies, et cetera. By this way, my boy, I have succeeded in my intrigues, and I would have thee to follow my example. I was too fond of becoming a gallant man not to listen to his advice. Besides, I did not feel any aversion to an amorous intrigue. I determined to dress myself like a young lord, and find out some gallant adventures. I durst not disguise myself in our house, lest I should have been perceived. I took one of the finest

suits of cloaths in my master's wardrobe, made it up into a bundle, and took it to a barber's house, an acquaintance of mine, where I might dress and undress myself at my convenience. I made myself as fine as possible. The barber helped me to do it: and when I imagined we had done enough, I went towards St. Jerom's walks, where I imagined I should meet with some intrigue that would please me. But before I arrived there I lighted upon one, with which I was much pleased.

As I was going acrofs the street, I perceived a lady well dressed, and very genteel, come out of a little house, and go into a hackney-coach, which stood at the door. I stopped to view her, and saluted her in such a manner as pointed out plainly that I was not a little delighted with her. She, to let me see that she perceived my attention perhaps more than I imagined she did, raised her veil for a moment, and shewed me one of the most beautiful faces I had ever seen. The coach drove off, and I remained behind in the emotion this divine apparition had raised in my breast. A beautiful creature, said I to myself; I warrant her she will furnish me. If Magicon is in love with two ladies as handsome as this, he is a lucky fellow. Had I such a mistress, how delighted should I be!

While I was thus reflecting, I chanced to see an old woman at the window of the house from whence the amiable person came, who desired me to come in. I immediately flew into the house, and found this venerable discreet matron
in

in a pretty genteel parlour, who taking me for a marquis, very respectfully saluted me; saying, Signior, I do not doubt but that you think badly of a woman who beckons you to enter the house, without being acquainted with you; but perhaps when you know that I use every body in this free way, you will think more favourably of me. You have the appearance of a court lord. You are not wrong, my dear, said I, stretching out my right leg, and falling away to the left, I am of one of the best families in Spain. You have that appearance, said she, and I must confess I like to be of service to persons of quality. It is my foible. I saw you at my window, and perceived that you ogled a lady that had just gone from my house. Have you a regard for her? Inform me sincerely. Yes, said I, upon my honour I am captivated with her. I never beheld so beautiful a creature. Let us have a meeting, and rely upon my gratitude. You have done offices of this sort for other persons of my quality, and know by that how well we are accitomed to pay for them.

I have already informed you, replied the old gentlewoman, that I am devoted to serve the quality. I am fond of being useful to them. For example, I admit certain ladies into my house, whom the appearance of virtue prevents seeing their lovers at home. Very well, said I, and it is likely you were doing as much for the lady we spoke of. No, answered she, it is a young widow of quality, who wants to have a lover, but she is so hard to please, that I cannot promise you success, whatever your merit may be.

be. I have already presented her three likely young gentlemen, but she has refused them all. 'Death! said I with an air of assurance, do but once introduce me into her company, and I will answer for the rest. I want to have some conversation with so nice a lady: I never met with any of that character as yet. Well then, said the old woman, return here to morrow at this time, and your curiosity shall be satisfied. I will not fail, answered I. We shall see whether a young lord may not have the pleasure of making a conquest.

Then I went to the barber's, without looking for other adventures, being very impatient to see the conclusion of this. The next day, when I had dressed myself to the best advantage, I repaired to the old woman's house, at the appointed time. My lord, says she, you are very exact, and I am glad of it. The affair is worth the trouble. I have seen our young widow, and we have had a good deal of conversation about you. I was ordered not to mention it, but I am so much your friend, that I cannot avoid it. You have made as great an impression on her as she has on you, and you are in a likely way to be soon happy. Between you and me, she is a nice bit. Her husband lived a short time with her. He was but a kind of a shadow, she is as good as a virgin. The old lady no doubt meant one of her virgins, who knew how to enjoy life without having husbands.

The heroine in a short time arrived in a hackney-coach. As soon as she entered the hall,
I made

I made her five or six foppish bows, and then approached her in a very familiar manner, saying, Behold a young lord, who is entrapt in your snare. Your image has been imprinted in my mind ever since I saw you yesterday, and you have expelled a dullness that had begun to take place there. The triumph is too glorious for me, answered she, lifting up her veil; but I must not rejoice too much. Young lords are fond of variety, and nothing is so difficult to keep as a courtier's heart. Ah! my queen, said I, if you chuse we will leave that to the future, and now think only of the present. You are genteel, I am amorous. If you approve of my passion, let us engage without reflexion: let us, like mariners, embark, and not fear the hazards of the sea. Let us only think of pleasure.

As soon as I had uttered these words I in a transport of joy threw myself at her feet, and to imitate the beaux, very petulantly urged her to make me happy. She seemed to comply, but would not content, as it was only our first meeting: so she pushed me gently from her. Stop, says she, you are too forward, you have the appearance of a libertine. Madam, said I, you certainly cannot be against what all ladies of fashion love? None but citizens are afraid of libertinism. Your reasons, said she, are too powerful to be opposed. I find it is in vain to dissemble with young lords like you. A woman must advance half way. Know therefore, you have gained the victory, added she apparently confuted, as if her modesty had suffered by having

ving made that confession; you have inspired me with sentiments I never felt before; and nothing now is wanting, but to be acquainted who you are, to make choice of you for my lover. I look upon you to be a young lord, and a man of honour, but I am not certain of it; and as prepossessed as I am in your favour, I will not bestow myself on one with whom I am unacquainted.

I recollected in what way Don Antonio's servant informed me he was accustomed to extricate himself out of such perplexities, and determining like him to pass for the master, Madam, says I to my fair one, I will not be against informing you who I am. I need not be ashamed of it. Did you never hear Don Matthias de Silva mentioned? Yes, said she, I have seen him at a relation's of mine. As great a share of impudence as I had got, I was perplexed with this answer of her's; but presently recollecting myself, and putting my genius to the stretch, to extricate myself out of this difficulty in as genteel a manner as possible, My angel, said I, you know a lord whom I also am acquainted with; I am of the same family. His uncle married a sister-in-law of an uncle of my father's, so that you may see we are nearly related. My name is Don Cæsar. I am the only son of the famous Don Fernand de Ribera, who was slain fifteen years ago in an engagement on the frontiers of Portugal. I could give you a description of the engagement, which was excessively hot; but it would spend the
moments

moments that are so valuable in love, and may be employed in a more agreeable manner.

After this conversation, I became more pressing and passionate. My angel was not at all affected by it. The favours she bestowed on me made me only desirous of others which she would not grant. The cruel woman left me in this condition, got into her coach, and drove away. Though I was not perfectly happy, yet I was content with my good fortune. If I have not been able to gain the favour I urged for, said I to myself, it is because my princess is a lady of quality, who would think it indecent to comply with my transports at the first interview. Her high birth makes her delay rendering me happy for a few days. Notwithstanding the favourable opinion I had of her, I could not avoid sometimes thinking she might be a counterfeit, and did it in the most honourable light, and the most advantageous opinion I had of her had the predominancy in my mind. When we parted, we agreed to meet again the next day; and the hopes of being then in possession of the height of my wishes gave me a taste beforehand of the pleasures I hoped to enjoy.

I returned to my barber's with my head full of these pleasing images: I changed my dress, and went to my master, who I knew was at the tennis court. I found him at play, and perceived by his looks that he was winning; for he was none of those insensible gamesters who ruin themselves without altering their countenance.

He

He was full of insolence when he win, and surly when fortune was against him. He went from the tennis court to the Prince's theatre, and was in a very good temper. I accompanied him to the play-house door, where giving me a ducat, he said to me, There, Gil Blas, since I have been lucky to-day, be thou so much the better for it. Go amuse thyself with thy companions, and come to Arsenia's for me at midnight, where I intend supping with Don Alexio Segiar. So saying, he entered the house, and I remained without, thinking with whom I should spend my ducat, according to the intention of the donor. I was not long at a loss about it; I met with Clarino, Don Alexio's servant, we went to the first tavern, and remained there till it was late. From thence we repaired at midnight to Arsenia's, whither Clarino was ordered to come as well as I. A little boy opened the door, and shewed us into a small hall, where Florimonda and Arsenia's women were making merry, while their mistresses were entertaining themselves with our masters. Two good guests arriving, who were already half-suddled, could not but be agreeable to such women, especially as they were actresses. But how was I amazed, when I beheld my widow to be one of them! my amiable widow, whom I imagined to be either a marchioness or countess. She was in no less consternation, to perceive her dear Don Cæsar de Ribera changed into a servant. However, we viewed one another for some time without being disconcerted. We had.

had both of us a great inclination to laugh, and we did not long keep from it. After which Laura (that was the name of my princess) taking me aside, while Clarino was engaged with her companion, presented me her hand, and whispered me, Signior Don Cæsar, since it has happened so, let us not find fault with one another, but do each other justice. You acted your part surprisingly, and I did not perform mine amiss. What say you? own that you took me for one of those fine women of quality, who are fond of intrigues. It is true, answered I, my angel, but whoever you be, dress has made no alteration in my sentiments. Accept of my services, and allow Don Matthias's servant to end what Don Cæsar had so happily begun. Yes, said she, I am still sonder of thee in thy own character, than in that of another. Thou art a man the same as I am a woman, that is the greatest approbation I can bestow on thee. I accept thee among the number of my admirers. We shall have no occasion for the service of the old woman. Tho mayest come here when thou thinkest proper. The ladies of the theatre live without constraint, higgledy-piggledy among the men. The town sees it and laughs at it, and what then? thou knowest it is our business to amuse them.

We broke off here, because there were others present. The conversation became general, lively, merry, and full of plain double entendres. Every one mentioned something, and my charming Laura in particular, who was Arsenia's maid,

maid, made it appear very plain that she had a great deal more wit than virtue. We often overheard our masters and the actresses burst into loud fits of laughter, which make us conclude that their conversation was much of the same kind with ours. If all the witty things that were said at Arsenia's that night were wrote down, they would, I dare say, have made a very instructive book for youth. In the mean time day-break coming upon us, made us depart. Each of us followed our respective masters, I Don Matthias, and Clarino Don Alexio.



C H A P. VI.

The Conversation of some Lords about the Performers of the Prince's Company.

THE same day, while my master was dressing, he received a card from Don Alexio Segiar, desiring his attendance at his house. We went thither, and found the Marquis de Zeneta and another young nobleman with him, whom I had not seen before. Don Matthias, said Segiar to my master, presenting that gentleman to him, this is my relation Don Pompeio de Castro, who has been from his infancy at the court of Portugal. He came last night to Madrid, and designs setting out for Lisbon to-morrow. As we can have his company for no more than this day, I am determined to spend it with him in as agreeable a manner as possible, and I thought that

that I should want your company and the Marquis de Zeneta to help me out in it. Upon this Don Alexio's relation and my master embraced, and many compliments passed between them. I was greatly delighted with Don Pompeio's conversation, who appeared to be endowed with excellent parts.

They dined at Segiar's house, and played at cards till it was time to go to the play. They then went to the prince's theatre, to see a new tragedy, called, *The Queen of Carthage*. When the play was ended, they returned and supped at the same place where they had dined. Their discourse at first was about the play they had seen performed, and afterwards on the actors. As for the piece itself, says Don Matthias, I cannot say much for it. *Æneas* is represented flatter there than in the *Æneid*, but I must own it was well performed. What is Don Pompeio's opinion of it? He does not appear to be of the same way of thinking. Gentlemen, says the cavalier smiling, I perceived you were so delighted with the actors, and particularly with the actresses, that I cannot inform you what I think of it. Very well, says Don Alexio interrupting him; beware of what you say of our actresses before us, who are their guarantees. If there be occasion for it, we will give certificates for them. I make not the least doubt of it, replied his relation; you will answer for their lives and morals, I perceive you are so much their friends.

Your players at Lisbon, says the Marquis de Zeneta smiling, are certainly better than ours. I believe they may, answered Don Pompeio, at least

least there are some that are very excellent. Those are certain of your recommendation, replies the Marquis. I never keep company with them, and therefore judge of them without being prepossessed in their favour. Inform me honestly, do you indeed think that your performers are a good company. I cannot say so, replies the Marquis, I will answer but for very few of them, and am silent about the rest. Will not you grant that she who performed the part of Dido did it excellently? Did not she describe that queen with all the dignity and perfection that agrees with the idea we have of her? Were you not amazed to see how artfully she engages the attention of the spectator, and makes him feel the emotions of all the passions she describes. She may be said to be a compleat mistress of all the graces of declamation. I allow, says Don Pompeio, that she can move and affect: never performer had more feeling, and the representation was excellent; but she is far from being a good actress. Two or three things in her acting displeased me. When she would denote surprize, she rolls her eyes in a strange manner, which is not at all becoming a princess. Add to this, that in raising her voice, which is naturally low, she takes away the sweetness of it, and makes it disagreeable. Besides, in many places of the play she did not appear to know the meaning of what she was saying: but however I will rather impute this to inattention than a want of knowledge.

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By what I can perceive, says Don Matthias to the critic, our actresses must not expect any encomium from you. Not at all, says Don Pompeo, I can see that some of them have a genius, notwithstanding all these defects; nay, I must confess to you, the actress who performed the woman's part in the interlude delighted me. She is a woman of fine parts, and says every thing with a graceful air. If there was a witticism in it, she seasoned it with a malicious smile, and added new charms to it. Sometimes one may find fault with her for indulging her natural fire too much, and going beyond the limits of a proper boldness: but we must not be too hard upon them. I would only have her correct an ill custom which she has contracted. Sometimes she will interrupt the performance all on a sudden, to give way to a foolish desire of laughing, with which she is taken. You will say she is clapped by the pit; there indeed I confess she is fortunate.

And how do you like the men? says the Marquis, interrupting him; you will certainly have no compassion on them, since you pay so little regard to the women. Not at all, says Don Pompeo, there are some of the young performers that seem to promise well; and in particular I was delighted with him who performed the part of Dido's first minister. He speaks naturally, and much in the same manner as our performers in Portugal. If you liked him, says Segiar, he who performed the part of Æneas certainly

certainly must have pleased you. Is not he a fine performer? an original? An original indeed! replied the critic. He has tones which are particular to him, and very sharp ones. He almost always diverts nature. He hastens over the words which contain the sense, and dwells on the others; nay, he exalts his voice on conjunctions. He particularly pleased me, when he represented to his confidant the violence he did to himself to abandon Dido. Grief cannot be more comically described. In short, cousin, says Don Alexio, you will soon make us think that they have no great taste at the court of Portugal. Do not you know that the performer you speak of is greatly admired? did you not see how he was applauded? That is no great proof of his merit, says Don Pompeio; bad performers are for the most part greatly applauded by the pit. The audience are fond of what is glaring, and neglect what is just, as we are informed by Phædrus, in a curious fable, which allow me to relate. It is as follows.

The inhabitants of a certain city assembled at a great square to see some pantomimes perform their buffoonries. There was one among these performers, who was constantly applauded by the people. This buffoon, when the representation was almost ended, would needs exhibit something uncommon. He came upon the stage, quite alone, stooping down, and endeavoured to counterfeit the crying of a sucking pig. He imitated it so well, that they all imagined there was one concealed under his cloak. They ordered

dered him to open his cloak. He did so; and the people seeing nothing under it, applauded him more furiously than ever. A countryman, who was among the spectators, offended with these tokens of their admiration, Gentlemen, says he, you have no reason to be so pleased with this buffoon; he is not such a good performer as you think he is. I can represent a young pig better than he; and if you doubt it, come hither to-morrow at this time, and you shall be satisfied. The audience, prepossessed in favour of the pantomime, came the next day, rather to hiss the peasant, than see what he could do. The two rivals made their appearance on the stage. The buffoon began, and was more applauded than he was the day before. Then the countryman stooping down in his turn, and covering his head with his cloak, took a real young pig which he had under his arm by the ear, and caused it to make a great noise. Nevertheless, the populace preferred the pantomime, and hissed the countryman; who immediately let them see the young pig, saying, Gentlemen, it is not me whom you hiss, it is the pig itself. See what rare judges you are.

Cousin, says Don Alexio, thy fable is a little too severe; but yet for all thy young pig, we shall not give up our actors and actresses. Let us alter the conversation, I am wearied of this. You will set out to-morrow then, notwithstanding I have so great a desire for you to stay longer. Was it in my power, answers his kinsman, I would stay with a deal of pleasure. I have in-

formed you already, that I came to the Spanish court about a state affair. I had an audience with the prime-minister yesterday. I am to be with him again to-morrow morning, and will immediately after set out for Lisbon. Thou art become a Portuguese, says Don Alexio, and probably will not return again to Madrid. In all likelihood I may not, replies Don Pompeio. I have the pleasure of being in the good graces of the king of Portugal; I live very happily at his court: yet, notwithstanding he is so kind to me, (can you imagine it?) I was about quitting his dominions for ever. For what reason? says the Marquis, pray inform us. With all my heart, answers Don Pompeio, and my history is contained in what I am going to tell you.



CH A P. VII.

The History of Don Pompeio de Castro.

MY kinsman, continues he, knows that I was inclined to bear arms, ever since I was a boy; and finding our country was in peace, I went to Portugal; from whence I crossed over into Africa, with the duke of Branganza, who gave me a commission in the army under his command. Being a younger brother, and not having a great fortune, I was obliged to signalize myself in such a manner, as would make the general take notice of me. I behaved so well,

well, that the Duke promoted me, and placed me in a condition to stay in his service with honour. After a tedious war, the conclusion of which you all know, I settled at court; and being recommended by the general officers, the king allowed me a handsome pension. To shew how sensible I was of the generosity of that monarch, I lost no occasion to manifest my gratitude by my diligence; I always attended when the courtiers were admitted into his presence. By this behaviour, I insensibly became his favourite, and received new benefits from him.

One day having distinguished myself at the ring, and a bull-fight, my strength and dexterity was commended by the whole court; and when I returned home, loaded with their applause, I found a billet, importing that a lady, the conquest of whom ought to please me more than all the honour I had gained that day, wanted to speak with me; and that in the evening I had no more to do, but to come to a certain place that was there appointed. This letter pleased me more than all the applauses I had before received; I thought that the person who wrote it was a woman of fortune. You may easily imagine that I was punctual to the appointment. An old woman waited to be my guide. She conducted me by a little door into the garden of a large house, whence she took me into a grand closet, saying, stop there; I will go inform my mistress that you are arrived. The closet being enlightened by wax candles in golden sconces, let me see a great number of curious things;

and this confirmed me that the lady must be as noble as I imagined her to be. If every thing I saw assured me of her quality before she made her appearance, when she came, her grand and majestic air convinced me of it: yet for all that I was deceived.

Signior cavalier, says she, after the advances I have made in your favour, it would be endless to strive to hide the great affection I have for you. It was not the merit which the court were this day witnesses of, in respect to you, that was the first motive of it; it only forwarded the discovery of them. I have seen you more than once; I have inquired into your character, and found it so good, that I determined to follow my inclination. Do not imagine, added she, that you have made a conquest of a dutchess; I am no more than the widow of a captain of the king's guards: but what will make your victory glorious, is the preference I give you to one of the greatest dukes in the kingdom. I am beloved by the duke of Almeyda, and he does every thing that he can to please me. He could never succeed; I only out of vanity allow his caresses.

Though by what I had heard her say I found I had to do with a coquet, yet the adventure did not displease me. Donna Hortensia, for that was her name, was still young, and I was delighted with her beauty. Besides, I was offered the possession of a heart which a duke in vain sought to obtain. What a conquest was this for a young cavalier! I immediately fell at Hortensia's

Hortensia's feet, to thank her for her regard for me. I said every thing that a man of gallantry could think of, and she had reason to be contented with my extacy. Thus we parted good friends, after we had agreed to see one another every night that the duke d'Almeyda was not to be there, which I was promised to be acquainted with, and which they did not neglect, so that, in short, I became the Adonis of this new Venus.

But we must not expect pleasures of eternal duration in this life. Whatever means the lady took not to let my rival know of our correspondence, he did not fail to come to the knowledge of what it was very necessary for us he should be ignorant of. He was informed of every thing by one of the lady's maids. This lord, naturally generous, but haughty, passionate, and jealous, was irritated at my presumption. Anger and jealousy took possession of his mind, and listening only to the dictates of his wrath, he determined to be revenged of me after a base manner. While I was with Hortensia one evening, he waited for me at the garden door, with all his servants armed with clubs. As soon as I came out, he made those villains take hold of me, and bid them beat me to death. Strike, says he, let him die under your hands; I will thus punish his insolence. As soon as he had said these words, his people all fell on me, and gave me so many blows, that they left me for dead on the place. Then they went away with their master, who had been greatly delighted with this cruel

spectacle. Some persons happening to be coming by in the morning, seeing that there was still some life in me, were so good as to take me to a surgeon, who being very skilful in his profession, made a perfect cure of me in two months. I then repaired to court, and lived as I was accustomed to do. I never went back to Hortensia, who took no means to let me see her again, because the duke on these terms had forgiven her infidelity.

Since my adventure was well known, nobody took me for a coward. I was universally admired for being so quiet under such an affront; for I let no person know what I thought, and appeared not to resent it. Some imagined, that as courageous as I was, my antagonist's rank kept me in awe, and made me put up with the treatment I had met with. Others, with more reason, were diffident of my silence, and imagined that the quiet situation of my soul was only a deceitful calm. The king appeared to be of the latter way of thinking; he thought that I would not brook such an affront without revenge, as soon as occasion served. To find out my intention, he took me one day into his closet, and said to me, Don Pompeio, I am acquainted with the accident that has befallen you, and must own that I am amazed to see you so quiet under it; you certainly dissemble. Sire, answered I, I am ignorant who the offender is. I was assaulted in the night by men who were strangers to me, so that I must put up with the misfortune

tune

tune as well as I can. No, no, says the king, do not imagine that you can make me believe so; I have heard all. The duke of Almeyda has mortally affronted you. You are a man of honour, and a Castilian; I know what these qualities will make you do. You are resolved to be avenged, and I order you to inform me what you design to do. Fear nothing, you will not be sorry for letting me into the secret.

As it is your majesty's pleasure, answered I, I must acquaint you what I have determined to do in the affair. Yes, Sire, I do intend revenging the affront I have suffered. Every man that bears the name of gentleman is accountable to his race for it. You know what base treatment I have met with; and to be revenged in a way suitable to the offence, I intend affasinating the duke of Almeyda, by stabbing him with a poinard, or shooting him through the head; after which I will endeavour to escape into Spain. This is my intention. It is rash, said the king, yet I cannot blame you, after the base treatment you have received from the duke of Almeyda. He merits the chastisement you have reserved for him; but be not in over great a haste in executing your enterprize. Allow me to find out means to compromise the affair between you. Ah, Sire, said I a little angrily, why did you make me reveal my secret to you? What means can there be found out? If it be not one that will please you, said he interrupting me, you may do what you chuse.

chuse. I do not intend to abuse the trust you have put in me; I will not betray your honour: you may make yourself easy on that point.

I was very anxious to know how the king would have this affair accommodated. It was thus: he had a private conversation with the duke of Almeyda about it: Duke, says he, you have injured Don Pompeo de Castro. You know that he is a man of a good family, a gentleman, for whom I have a regard, and who has been of service to me. You ought to give him satisfaction. I am not against it, answers the duke. If he complain of my wrath, I am ready to do him justice in the field. There must be another sort of a reparation, says the king. A Castilian gentleman is too well acquainted with the point of honour to fight in a fair manner with a base assassin. I cannot give you any other name; and you cannot atone for the baseness of your action, but by giving your enemy a flick, and offering to receive his blows. Heavens! exclaims the duke, would you have a man of my character, Sir, degrade himself to a plain gentleman, and receive blows from him? No, answered the monarch, I will get Don Pompeo to promise that he will not strike you: you will only have to ask his pardon when you give him the flick; that is all I demand of you. It is too much, said the duke hastily; I will rather continue exposed to the hazard I run from his secret resentment. Your life is precious to me, says the king, and I would willingly have this affair
made

made up without any bad consequence; to bring it to a conclusion that may not be very disagreeable to you, I will myself be the sole witness of the satisfaction I command you to give the Spaniard.

It was very necessary that the king should have the duke so much under his command, to get him to consent to make so mortifying a concession: he consented to it at last. Then he sent for me, and told me what conversation he had with the duke of Almeyda, asking if I would be satisfied with the reparation he had agreed upon. I answered yes; and would be so far from striking him, that I would not even accept of the stick when presented to me. The affair being thus adjusted, the duke and I met one day in the king's apartment, at an appointed hour. Come, says he to the duke, own that you are in the wrong, and deserve to be forgiven. My enemy then made excuses to me, and gave me the stick he had in his hand. Don Pompeio, says the king at that instant, take the stick, and let not my presence hinder you from satisfying your injured honour; I free you of the promise you make not to strike the duke. No, Sir, answered I, it is enough that he puts himself in my power to receive the blows. An injured Spaniard requires no more. Well, says the king, since you are content with this satisfaction, you may now decide the affair in a regular manner at the points of your swords. That is what I ardently desire, says the duke, and that alone is

L. S.

capable.

capable of making me reconcile myself for the disgraceful step I have made.

As soon as he had said these words, he went out, quite enraged and in confusion; and two hours after he sent to acquaint me, that he waited for me in a private place. I repaired thither, and found him in a humour to fight it to the last. He was not more than forty-six years of age. He was both skilful and courageous. The match was pretty equal between us. Come, Don Pompeo, says he, let us decide our dispute. We both of us have reason to be exasperated; you for the usage you received from me, and I for having asked your pardon. So saying, he drew so suddenly upon me, that I had hardly time to put myself on my guard. He pushed with a great deal of vigour at first; but I had the good luck to parry all his thrusts. I in my turn pushed at him, and found I had to do with a man who knew as well how to defend himself as to attack: and I do not know what might have happened, had not he made a false step in retiring, which caused him to fall on his back. I immediately stooped, and said, Get up. Why do you spare me? answered he, I am injured by your compassion. I will not do such an injury to my glory, replied I, as to take the advantage of your accident. I say once more, get up, and let us end the combat.

Don Pompeo, said he arising, honour will not allow me to fight against you, after this instance of your generosity. What would the world say of me, should I kill you? I should be
accounted

accounted a scoundrel, that had deprived a person of life, who had it in his power to have taken away mine: I cannot therefore fight any longer, and I find my gratitude gives birth to soft transports, which succeed the furious emotions that before reigned in my breast. Don Pompeio, continued he, let us give over hating one another. Let us even do more, let us be friends. Ah! my lord, said I, I joyfully embrace the agreeable proposal. I from this instant swear a sincere friendship to you, and to convince you of it, I vow that I will never set my feet in Hortensia's doors again, even though she should desire it. No, replies he, I rather ought to give the lady up to you, since she prefers you in her heart. But you are fond of her, said I interrupting him, and you may not like the favours that she might grant me: I will therefore sacrifice them to your repose. Ah! too generous Castilian, said the duke, grasping me fast in his arms, how am I delighted with your sentiments! What remorse do they produce in my mind! With what sorrow, with what shame do I reflect on the insult you have received! The satisfaction I made you in the king's closet seems now to me not half sufficient. I will make you better amends for the insult; and in order to erase the reproach of it effectually, I will give you one of my nieces, who is at my disposal. She is but fifteen, very pretty, and a rich heiress. I made my compliments to the duke in as respectful a manner as the honour he did to receive me into his alliance mer-

rited; and in a short time after married his niece. This lord was commended by the whole court for making the fortune of a young gentleman whom he had covered with disgrace; and my friends rejoiced with me for the happy issue of an affair that might have had so fatal a conclusion. Gentlemen, I have lived very happily at Lisbon ever since that time. The best agreement subsists betwixt me and my spouse. The duke of Almeyda is constantly giving me new proofs of his friendship; and I may say without boasting, that I am still in the good graces of the king of Portugal. The consequence of my journey to Madrid at this time makes me certain that I am yet in his favour.



C H A P. VIII.

By what Accident Gil Blas was obliged to look out for a new Place.

IN such a manner did Don Pompeo end his history, which Don Alexio's valet and I listened to in an outer room, for they had taken care to send us away before he began it. We stood behind the door, and hearkened so attentively, that we did not lose a word. After this, they set to drinking; but they broke up before morning, because Pompeo was to be soon with the prime minister, and was desirous to be at rest.

rest. The Marquis de Zeneta and my master embraced that gentleman, and bid him adieu, with his relation.

For this time we went to bed before morning, and when Don Matthias got up, he conferred a new employment on me. Gil Blas, says he, take pen, ink and paper, and write two or three words for me, which I will dictate to you. I make thee my secretary. So, says I to myself, this is a new post for me: as a servant, I go along with my master every where; as a valet de chambre, I dress him; and write for him, as a secretary. God be praised, I am going to act three parts, like the threefold Hegate. Thou art ignorant, continues my master, what my intention is, but be discreet, and I will inform thee: it is as much as thy life is worth, to say any thing. As I am often along with persons who boast of ladies' favours, I am determined to give them as good as they bring; I will have feigned letters constantly in my pocket which I will pretend come from women, and let them see them. This will amuse me, and make me more happy than them, who are at the trouble of acquiring conquests merely for the pleasure of making them known; whereas I will publish them, and be at no trouble in obtaining them: but, continued he, alter thy hand in such a manner, that the billets may not seem to come all from one person.

Upon this I prepared myself to obey Don Matthias's orders; I took pen, ink, and paper, and

and he dictated a billet to me, in the following words :

“ **Y**OU did not come last night to the
 “ place agreed upon. Ah, Don Matthi-
 “ as ! what can you say in your defence ? How
 “ much was I in the wrong, and how justly have
 “ I been punished, for thinking that you would
 “ give up all the amusements, all the business in
 “ the world, for the pleasure of being in the
 “ company of

“ DONNA CLARA de MENDOZA.”

This being done, he dictated another to me, in the name of a woman who had given up a prince for him ; and after this a third, from a lady, who informed him, if she could be certain he would be discreet, she would go with him to the island of Venus. He not only made me write the letters, but made me sign them with the names of persons of quality. I could not avoid informing him, that I imagined it was too nice and dangerous an affair ; but he bid me give my advice only when he sought it. I was therefore obliged to be silent, and do as he commanded me. This business done, he arose, and I helped to dress him. He put the letters in his pocket, went out, and I accompanied him to Don Juan de Moncado, who that day had five or six gentlemen of his acquaintance to dinner. There was a genteel entertainment, and joy, the best ingredient in all festivals, reigned during the repast. Every one of the guests bore
 a part

a part in keeping up the conversation; some by witticisms, others by relating exploits, of which they made themselves the heroes. My master did not let slip so good an opportunity to esteem himself on the letters he had made me write; he read them out to the company with such an air of assurance, that every body except his secretary might have thought them genuine. There was one gentleman, named Don Lopez de Velasco, among the rest, to whom he read them. This man, who was very sedate, instead of doing like the rest, and complimenting the reader on the favours he had received from these ladies, asked him in a sullen manner, if the conquest of Donna Clara had cost him a great deal of trouble? Not at all, says Don Matthias, she made all the advances; she met me in the park, she liked me, sent after me, learned who I was, and wrote me a billet, appointing an hour in the night for me to come to her, when all the family should be in bed but her and her woman. I repaired to her house, and was conducted to her apartment; I am sorry that I cannot with discretion tell what followed.

Signior de Velasco changed countenance at this laconic recital, and it was evident that he was concerned in the lady that was spoke of. All those billets, says he, casting a furious look at my master, are not genuine, and particularly that which you brag you have received from Donna Clara de Mendoza; there is not a more chaste lady in Spain. She has been courted these two years by a gentleman no ways inferior to you either

ther in birth or merit, and he has been scarcely able even to procure the most innocent favours, though he might flatter himself, that if she ever granted any others, it would be to himself alone. Who says any thing to the contrary? replies Don Matthias in a jovial way. I am of your opinion, that she is a lady of strict honour, and in course you should be satisfied that nothing passed between us but what was very honourable. Don Lopez interrupting him, said, this is too much, let us have none of your jesting, you are an impostor; you were never in Donna Clara's company in the night, and I will not allow you to hurt her character. I need not say any more to you. He then went away in such an abrupt manner, that it was very evident that the affair would have bad consequences. Don Matthias, who was bold enough for a man of his character, scorned Don Lopez's threats. What a silly fellow he is, said he, falling a laughing; knights-errants only protected the beauty of their mistresses, but he will maintain the virtue of his, which appears to me to be still more extravagant.

Velasco's going away, which Moncado in vain strove to prevent, did not disturb the company. The gentlemen did not mind it much; they continued carousing till morning. My master and I went to bed about five o'clock. I was very drowsy, and expected to have a good long sleep; but I calculated without my host, or rather without our porter, who an hour after awaked me, to inform me that there was a young man wanted.

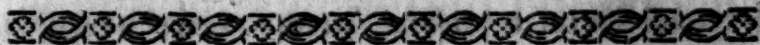
ed to speak with me. Devil take thee for a porter, said I gaping; do not you know that I have not been one hour in bed? Tell the young man that I am asleep, and that he must come again at another time. He says he must speak to you immediately, replied the porter. Upon which I arose, put on my coat and breeches, and went to the door, cursing him that I was going to all the way. Friend, says I, be so good as inform me what urging affair gives me the honour of your company so early. I have a letter, says he, which I must deliver into Don Matthias's own hand, and he must immediately read it, it being of the utmost importance: I beg you would therefore take me to him. Thinking it was an affair of consequence, I made free to wake my master. I ask pardon, Sir, for disturbing you at this improper time, but the importance——

What do you want with me? said he in a hurry. My lord, says the young man, who was along with me, I have a letter, which Don Lopez de Velasco desired me to deliver to yourself. Don Matthias took the billet, opened it, and having perused it, said to Don Lopez's servant, Child, I would not get up before noon, if they would propose ever such an amusement to tempt me: judge then if I will rise to fight at six o'clock in the morning. Inform thy master that I will meet him at the place appointed at two o'clock. Go and let him know my answer. So saying, he lay down again, and fell asleep.

He got up betwixt twelve and one o'clock,
dressed

dress'd himself very composedly, telling me when he went out, that I need not accompany him. But I had not patience enough to wait for the consequence to obey his commands: I walked behind him till I came to St. Jerom's walks, where I saw Don Velasco waiting for him. They immediately began the combat, it continued long, they pushed both with great vigour and skill. At last, victory declared in favour of Don Lopez: he ran my master through. Don Matthias fell, and Don Lopez made off, very well contented with the vengeance he had taken. I immediately ran up to my unfortunate master, whom I found just a dying. I shed tears at the sight, and especially when I reflected, that he had made me the cause of his death. But for all my grief, I considered what I had to do on this occasion, for my own interest. I immediately went home, without mentioning the affair to any body. I put up my cloaths and other affairs, and put some of my master's among them in a mistake. I took them to the barber's, and then published about the town, the fatal accident of which I had been a witness. I informed every body of it that would hear me, and did not neglect to acquaint Rodriguez with it. He appeared to be not so sorry as he was studious about the means he was to pursue. He got the servants together, made them follow him, and went to St. Jerom's walks along with them. We rais'd up our dying master, and took him home, for he was still breathing, but died two hours after. Thus Signior Don Matthias de
Silva.

Silva died, for reading at an improper time some forged billet-doux.



C H A P. IX.

In what Service he engaged, after Don Matthias de Silva's Death.

A Short time after Don Matthias was buried, all his servants were paid off and dismissed. I repaired to my barber's, with whom I lived in a very amicable manner, and was fonder of living there than at Melendez's. As I was not destitute of money, I was not in a hurry for a place; besides it was not now every place that I would accept of. I would serve none but quality, and determined to be very nice in the choice of a master. I did not imagine there was any too good for me, so favourable an opinion had I conceived of a young lord's valet preferable to all others.

While I was waiting until fortune should present me with such a place as I thought I merited, I imagined I could not pass my time better than by spending some of my idle hours with my adorable Laura, whom I had not been with ever since we made the discovery of ourselves. I durst not put on the cloaths of Don Cæsar de Ribera, nor unless it was for a disguise, put on that drest without passing for a mad-man; but my own cloaths were still pretty good, and by the

the help of the barber I dressed myself in a middling way between Don Cæsar and Gil Blas. In this condition I went to Arsenia's house, where I found Laura by herself in the same room we had before been in. Is it you? said she as soon as she perceived me; I imagined you had been lost; it is now eight days since you agreed to visit me: I find you keep your word, and particularly with the ladies.

I told her that my master's death, and the business which I had been engaged in, had prevented me, and added very gallantly, that even in the midst of them all, the adorable Laura was still uppermost in my mind. If it be so, said she, I have no more to upbraid you with, and must confess that I also thought of you. As soon as I heard of Don Matthias's misfortune, I formed a scheme that perhaps will not be disagreeable to you: I have often heard my mistress mention, that she had occasion for a man to be a kind of a steward, and keep an exact account of all the monies given him for the expences of the house. I have fixed my eyes on your lordship: I suppose you will manage that employment very well. I think, answered I, that I shall acquit myself to a wonder; I have read the *Oeconomiques* of Aristotle, and I am very exact in keeping accounts. But, my angel, said I, there is one scruple I have against entering into Arsenia's service. What scruple? says Laura. I have sworn, replied I, not to serve a citizen, nay, I have sworn by Styx. If Jupiter durst not break that oath, you may judge whether a valet must
pay

pay respect to it. Whom dost thou call citizens? says Arsenia's woman. What do you take us players to be? Do you rank us among tradesmen's or attorneys' wives? Know, friend, that actresses, by the connections they have with persons of quality, are noble and arch-noble.

Then since this is the case, said I, I may without undervaluing myself accept of the place you have contrived for me. Certainly, says she, it is much the same to go out of the service of a beau into that of a stage heroine. We are in all respects the same as people of quality, we have the same equipages, live as well, and act the same parts of life. For my part, I can see very little difference between a player and a marquis, take them all the day long. If there be three quarters of the day that the marquis on account of his birth is above the player, the player is still more above him for the other quarter, by reason of his acting the part of an emperor or a king. This, in my opinion, makes up for our want of nobility and grandeur, and renders us equal with the lords and ladies of the court. Yes, truly, said I, you are upon a level with them. Players, I find, are not the people I imagined them to be, and you have given me a great inclination to be in the service of such honourable persons. Return then, said she, two days after this, I think in that time I will be able to prevail on my mistress to take thee: I will speak in thy favour, and having some influence over her,

I

I am pretty certain that I shall meet with success.

I thanked Laura for her good intentions. I let her see that my gratitude would be unlimited, and assured her of it with such transports as left her no room to doubt of my not being sincere. We talked a good while together, and probably would have continued longer, if a little boy had not come to inform my angel that Arsenia was wanting her. We then parted. I returned home in good hopes that I would get into a service that would please me, and went again to Laura's at the appointed time. I was just waiting for thee, said Arsenia's waiting-woman, in order to acquaint thee that thou art intendant of this household. Come along with me, and I will present thee to my mistress. So saying, she conducted me through an apartment which consisted of four or five rooms, all furnished in a very rich manner.

What grandeur! what luxury! I imagined that I was in the palace of a vice queen, or rather that I beheld all the riches in the world collected together in one place. Indeed there was the riches of many nations, and this apartment might be termed the temple of a goddess, where each stranger brings an offering of the rarities of his country. I beheld the deity seated on a fatten couch; she appeared beautiful and plump with the steams of sacrifice. She was in a genteel dishabille, and her pretty white hands were employed in making a new head-dress, in which she was to perform her part the next night.

Madam,

Madam, said her maid, this is the steward I mentioned to you. I am certain that you cannot get one that will answer your purpose better. Arsenia viewed me with attention, and I was so lucky as to meet with her approbation. So, Laura, says she, there is a fine lad, and I do not in the least doubt but that he will please me. Child, said she to me, I take you into my service, and have only to mention to you, that if you behave yourself well, you will have no reason to complain. I answered, that I would do what lay in my power to satisfy her. Finding we were agreed, I went to bring my cloaths, and immediately took possession of my place in her house.



C H A P. X.

Which is much about the same Length as the foregoing one.

AS it was near the time of going to the play, Laura and I were ordered to accompany our mistress to the theatre. We entered her tyring-room, where she was putting on a magnificent dress to perform in. When the curtain drew up, Laura carried me with her to a place where we could hear and have a very good view of the performers. The greatest part of them did not meet with my approbation, being no doubt disgusted at them from what I had heard

Don

Don Pompeo say against them. There were however many of them applauded, and some of them reminded me of the fable of the young pig.

As the performers came upon the stage, Laura told me their names. She not only named them, but described their characters in a very satirical manner. This performer, says she, is a silly fellow; that a brute; that young wanton girl whom you see there, and who looks so smirkingly, is called Rosarda; the company have a poor bargain of her; she would be enrolled in the band that is raising for the viceroy of Mexico, and is to be soon shipped off; view that bright constellation who is there advancing, that setting sun, it is Castilda; if she had demanded a piece of marble of every lover, as a princess of Egypt is said to have done heretofore, she might have raised a pyramid that would have reached to the heavens. In short, the baggage was against them all, her own mistress did not even escape her malicious tongue.

However, I must own my weakness: I was delighted with Laura, though her character was not morally good. She had such an agreeable manner of satirizing, that I was even fond of her malice. Between the acts she went to see if Arsenia stood in need of her, but instead of her coming to her place again, she amused herself with some fellows behind the scenes. I pursued her once to watch her, and saw she had a number of acquaintances. I counted three players that stopt her one after another to speak to her,

her, and I perceived they were very familiar. I did not approve of it, and this was the first time that I knew what it was to be jealous; I returned to my place so pensive and sad, that when Laura returned she observed it. Gil Blas, said she, amazed, what is the matter with thee? What has put thee into this humour since I was with thee? thou art quite melancholy. My angel, says I, I think I have reason, you are a little too free in your manners, I have seen you talking with the players. You have great reason, to be sure, to be pensive, said she smiling: does that make you uneasy? If you live among players, you must not mind such things. You must accustom yourself to our familiar ways: no jealousy, child. Jealous people are reckoned ridiculous amongst players. Indeed there are no such people here: fathers, husbands, brothers, uncles, cousins, are the easiest people living with us, and frequently make estates by it.

After having advised me not to be offended at any thing I should see, she told me, that I was the happy man who had found the way to her heart, and that she would always love me and me alone. Upon this assurance, which I might have distrusted without passing for a diffident person, I promised not to be disturbed, and I was as good as my word. Soon after I saw her laugh and speak with several men. When the performance was done, we went home with our mistress. Soon after, Florimonda repaired thither with three old lords and a player, who were

to sup there. Besides Laura and me, there were a cook, a coachman, and a valet in the house, we all five joined in preparing the supper. The cook, who was as perfect in her business as dame Jacinta, made ready the victuals with the assistance of the coachman; the valet and waiting-woman laid the cloth, and I furnished the buffet with several vessels of silver and gold which the goddesses had received; I likewise put many different sorts of wine on it, and waited as butler, to let my mistress see that I could do any thing of that kind. I viewed the looks of the actresses during the entertainment. They took upon themselves the airs of ladies of consequence, imagining themselves to be such. In place of giving the noblemen the title of excellency, they gave them only that of lordship, calling them simply by their names. These very noblemen indeed had spoiled them, by allowing them to be so familiar with them. The actor, on his part, being so used with performing the part of the hero, behaved himself to these lords without ceremony, he drunk their healths, and one would have imagined he expected to have his drunk in his turn.

Floridor, a silly vain coxcomb, who first got his name on the stage, by exhibiting a thing as silly and vain as himself, a composition of levity and affectation; this same Floridor, from wearing a livery, has even the presumption to call the two celebrated wits, Terence, and Ovid, his friends, and is allowed to sit down with gentlemen and persons of distinction.

My

My mistress's and Florimonda's behaviour with the noblemen, put me in mind of what Laura told me, that the marquis and the player were equal all day; she might likewise have added that they were as much so at night, which they passed together over their cups. Arsenia and Florimonda being naturally wanton, many fine expressions escaped them in their conversation, mixed with small favours and toyings, which were greatly relished by these old sinners. While my mistress was entertaining one of them with some innocent banter, her friend, who sat between the other two, did not perform the part of a Susanna. As I was viewing this picture, which had too many charms for a young man of my age, fruit was brought in. Then I placed the bottles and glasses on the table, and went to sup with Laura, who was waiting for me. Well, Gil Blas, says she, what do you think of the noblemen? They are, said I, no doubt, admirers of Arsenia and Florimonda. No, said she, they are old lechers who visit all coquets alike, without attaching themselves to any in particular: they only want trifling compliances, and are liberal enough for the freedoms that are allowed them. My mistress and Florimonda at this time have no lovers, I mean none that take upon them the authority of husbands; and would ingross all the pleasures of a house, because they are at all the cost. I am glad for my own part it is so, and maintain, that a sensible coquet should shun such engagements. Why should they allow any one man to be their master? They had better

gain a livelihood by getting a penny a time, than make rich on such conditions.

It was no easy matter to stop Laura's tongue when it was once set a going; words cost her nothing: what a fluency of language was the mistress of! She informed me of a number of adventures, that had happened to the actresses of the prince's company. From what I heard her say, I was of opinion, that I could not be better situated to be completely acquainted with vice. Unhappily I was of an age, when it does not strike people with horror; and the truth is, she described these irregularities in so artful a manner, that all she said appeared delightful to me. She had not time to inform me of the tenth part of the exploits of the actresses, for she had only been speaking three hours to me, when the noblemen and actor withdrew, with Florimonda, whom they accompanied to her own house.

As soon as they were gone, my mistress gave me some money, and said, Gil Blas, there are ten pistoles for thee to go to market with; five or six of our gentlemen and ladies are to dine with me to-morrow; be sure that we have plenty of every thing. Madam, said I, with this money I will take in hand to purchase enough to serve the whole troop. Young man, says she interrupting me, I desire that you will amend your expressions; you must say company, and not troop. A parcel of banditti are called a troop; and it is likewise the same when you speak of beggars, or authors; but when you speak of players,

players, mind always say a company, particularly if you are mentioning the comedians of Madrid, who very well deserve to be named a company. I told my mistress that I was sorry I had through ignorance used so disrespectful an expression, and most humbly intreated, that she would forgive me, protesting, that ever after, when I had occasion to mention the players at Madrid in a collective manner, I would always say the company.



C H A P. XI.

In what Manner the Players live together at Madrid, and how they use the Authors.

THE next morning I went to market, in order to make a beginning with my stewardship; it was fast-day, but my mistress told me that I might buy some good fat pullets, partridges, rabbits, and other poultry. Since the gentlemen players did not altogether agree with the customs of the church, they were not very strict in obeying her commandments. I brought home as much as would have been sufficient to have served twelve honest gentlemen in carnival-time for three days: so that the cook had sufficient employment all the forenoon. While dinner was making ready, Arsenia got up, and was at her toilet till noon, when Signiors Rosimiro and Ricardo came. Constantia and Celinaura,

two actresses, entered after them, and immediately after Florimonda, accompanied with a man, who had the appearance of a complete coxcomb; his hair was tied behind with coloured ribbands, his hat was cocked, and he wore a red feather in it: his fine shirt appeared at his bosom; his gloves and his pocket handkerchief hung at his sword hilt, and he wore his cloak with a grace peculiar to himself. Though he had a genteel air, and was well shaped, I at once saw something very particular in him. This gentleman, said I to myself, must certainly be an original. He was no sooner in Arsenia's apartment, than he with open arms ran to the actors and actresses, and embraced them with more familiarity, than the young beaux made use of who accompanied my master. My opinion was not altered when I heard him speak; he paused at every syllable, and pronounced his words in an emphatic tone, with looks and gestures that suited the subject. I had the curiosity to ask Laura, who that gentleman was? I do not wonder that thou art eager to know, says she, no person can either see or hear him, without having a desire to be informed who he is; his name is Signior Carlos Alonso de la Ventoleria; he was once a comedian, and in a whim left the stage, but has been very sorry for it since. Did you mind his black hair? It is dyed that colour, and so are his eyebrows and mustachios; he is older than Saturn, but when he was born, his parents neglected to have him registered, and he takes the benefit of their omission, calling himself twenty years younger

er than he is: he is besides as conceited as any man in Spain. He was almost fifteen years of age before he could either read or write, and then he got a tutor, who taught him to spell in Greek and Latin. He learned a number of stories by heart, which he has so often repeated, that he now thinks them true; he tells them in all companies; and one may say, that he often shews his wit at the expence of his memory. He is reputed to be a good actor, but I must take other people's word for it, as I own I do not approve of him: I hear him sometimes rehearse here, and amongst other failings, I find that his pronunciation is affected, he having a quavering voice, that gives it a silly antic air.

Such was the description that Laura gave me of this honorary actor, who was really in his aspect the proudest man I ever saw; he played the orator too, and did not fail to take two or three stories out of his budget, which he told with a studied and imposing air. On the other hand, the actors and actresses, who did not come there to be silent, were not mute; they began to speak of their absent companions in a manner that was not very charitable; but that is reckoned as nothing among players and authors; they make no scruple of speaking ill amongst their neighbours. Ladies, says Rosimiro, you cannot guess what our dear brother Cesarino has lately done. He purchased some silk stockings, ribbands, and gloves, this morning, and had them carried to the house by a little page, as if they had been sent by a countess. What knavery

there is! says Signior de la Ventoleria, with the air of a coxcomb; people were honefter in my time, we never thought of imposing on one another. It is true, indeed, the ladies took care to spare us the invention, by making the purchase themselves: it was their fancy. 'Odeath, says Ricardo, with as much vanity as the old player, they still have that fancy. If I was allowed to explain myself thereupon, I could: but one must be silent concerning adventures, and those in particular when persons of distinction are interested in them.

I desire, gentlemen, says Florimonda interrupting them, that you would not boast of ladies' favours; every body knows what kind of ladies they are. Let us speak of Ismenia; it is reported that the nobleman who bestowed so much money upon her, has left her at last. Yes, says Constantia, and I will inform thee of more, she has likewise lost a tradesman, whom she near ruined; I know the reason of it. Her Mercury made a sad mistake. He gave the lord the letter she had wrote to the tradesman, and the tradesman that which the lord should have got. Great losses these, my dear, cries Florimonda. As for the nobleman, says Constantia, his whole estate was spent, but the tradesman had still something remaining, and was worth having

Such was the conversation they had before dinner; and while they were at table, their discourse was very much the same. I do not know when I should end, was I to repeat all the scandal

dal I heard. The reader, I hope, will excuse me for neglecting it, in order to inform him of the reception of a poor devil of an author, who came to Arsenia's, when dinner was near ended.

Our valet came and told my mistress aloud, that a man with very dirty linen, whose shoes were not clean, and who, saving her presence, had much the appearance of a poet, wanted to speak with her. Make him come in, say Arsenia. Gentlemen, continues she, do not stir, it is only our author. Indeed it was so, and one whose play had been received. He brought my mistress her part. His name was Pedro de Moya. When he came into the room, he made five or six low bows to the company, who minded him very little. Arsenia only answered his profusion by nodding a little. He approached nearer to them, trembling and confused; he let his hat and gloves fall, took them up, and came nearer my mistress, to whom he offered her part, with more attention than a lawyer when he presents a petition to a judge. Madam, says he, be so good as accept the part which I take the freedom to present to you. She received it in a cold and disdainful manner, and did not so much as deign to answer his respects. Our author however was not discouraged at this, he embraced the opportunity, to give a part to Rosimiro, and another to Florimonda, who used him no better than Arsenia had done. On the contrary, the actor, who was as obliging as these gentlemen generally are, treated him with the most severe raillery.

raillery. Pedro de Moya perceived it all, but was obliged to put up with it, lest his play might suffer. He no doubt would be as severe on the players, according to their deserts; and he was no sooner gone, than the players, on the other hand, began to speak of the author with respect. Methinks, says Florimonda, that Signior Pedro de Moya was not very well pleased when he went away.

Madam, says Rosimiro, be not disturbed at that, authors are not worth the minding; they would soon forget themselves, if we allowed them to be equal with us. I know these poor creatures very well; the least encouragement would spoil them. Treat them therefore like slaves, and don't be afraid of wearing out their patience. If they sometimes leave you in displeasure, the itch of writing will soon make them return again; and it is sufficient for them that we condescend to perform their pieces. Right, says Arsenia; there is no hazard in losing an author, until he has made his fortune; and as soon as that is done, by our merit only, he grows idle, and we see no more of his pieces. It is very true, the company can do without them, and the public does not miss them.

The whole of them approved of this speech. Notwithstanding the ill usage that the authors receive from the players, they must put up with it; and the players, by claiming the superiority over them, shew what a mean opinion they have of them.

C H A P.

C H A P. XII.

Gil Blas takes a liking to the Theatre. He abandons himself to the Pleasures of the Stage, and grows tired of them in a short Time.

OUR company did not get up from table till it was time to go to the theatre. I accompanied them there, and saw the performance begin. I was so delighted with it, that I determined to go constantly. I never missed being there, and imperceptibly became reconciled to the customs of the players. How amazing is the force of habit ! I was pleased in particular with those that had the most rants and antick tricks ; and I was not particular in this.

I was as much entertained with the beauty of the pieces, as the way of representing them ; some of them quite transported me ; and those pleased me best, where all the cardinals or twelve peers of France made their appearance. Some parts of these very excellent poems I got by heart. I remember, that in two days, I got off a whole play, entitled, The Queen of Flowers. The Rose, which was the Queen, had the Violet for her confident, and the Jessamine for her squire. I supposed that nothing could be more curious than these works ; which I thought greatly honoured the genius of our nation.

I was not satisfied with beautifying my mind with the fine passages of the drama ; I endeavoured to perfect my joys, and in order to accomplish

complish it, listened attentively to what the actors said ; if they gave a play a good character, I respected it ; if they did not approve of it, I slighted it . I imagined that they knew as much about plays, as jewellers did about precious stones. However, notwithstanding they did not imagine that Don Pedro de Moya's play would have taken, it had great success. Yet I could not suspect their judgment ; I would rather have thought that the audience wanted common sense, than doubt of the infallibility of the company. But I was every where informed, that the pieces which the actors had the best opinion of, for the most part met with the worst success ; and on the contrary, those which they disapproved of commonly met with the greatest applause. They informed me that they seldom hit right, and gave me a thousand instances, where the pieces succeeded quite contrary to their expectations. Though I had had many more proofs, it would not then have given me a bad opinion of the excellence of their understanding.

I shall always remember what happened one day at the performing of a new comedy. The actors thought it dull and tedious, nay, they expected that the audience would not hear it out : but they would run the risk, and play the first act, which was applauded, and the second more than the first. What the duce, says Rosimiro, who would have thought that this play would have taken ! Then they performed the third act, which was more extolled than the two former. I cannot comprehend this, says Ricardo,
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we all thought this play good for nothing, and see how every body is pleased with it. Gentlemen, says an actor that was by, there are a great number of strokes of wit in the performance, which we did not perceive, and that is the reason of its being approved of.

After this, I never thought that the players were good judges, but became a just appraiser of their merit. They make good all the foolish things that are said of them. I have known actors and actresses spoiled with being applauded; and viewing themselves as objects of admiration, they have imagined that they favoured the public, when they condescended to play. I was shocked with their mistakes; but it was my loss to be pleased with their manner of living, and sink myself in debauchery. How could I avoid it? All their conversation was destructive to youth, and every thing I saw helped to ruin me. If I had even been ignorant of what had passed at Castilda's, Constantia's, and the other actresses, our own house alone was sufficient to have corrupted all the young people in Madrid. Not only old noblemen frequented it, but young rakes, heirs just come to the possession of their estates, and citizens and lawyers. The gay and the grave were admitted there, and every one was welcome for his money

Florimonda, who lived not a great distance from us, dined and supped always with my mistress. Most people were amazed at the friendship that subsisted between them. They were surprized that two coquettes could live upon so good

good terms, and every body imagined that one time or other they would fall out about a spark; but people were mistaken, they were perfect friends. Instead of being jealous of one another, as the sex generally are, they lived in common. They chose rather to divide the booty of men, than fall out about their sighs.

Laura, after the manner of these two celebrated companions, made the best of her young days. She had reason to acquaint me that I should see fine doings there. However, I appeared to be quite contented. I promised to resemble the company in that point: and concealed my sentiments for some time, satisfied with asking the names of the persons whom I saw she privately entertained. She always said that it was a cousin, or an uncle. I found she had a more numerous family than that of King Priam. Uncles and cousins did not satisfy her, she conversed also with strangers, and performed the widow of quality at the old woman's I have already mentioned. In short, to give an exact and true description of Laura, she was young, beautiful, and as coquettish as her mistress, who had no other advantage over her, than that she publicly entertained the town.

For three weeks did I live in this manner; during which time I delivered myself up to all kinds of debauchery: but I must confess, that I was often seized with sentiments of remorse, which proceeded from my education, and soured all my pleasures: debauchery could not triumph over that remorse; on the contrary, it augmented
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ed in proportion with it, and, in consequence of my happy disposition, I began to take a distaste to the disorderly way of living of the players. Ah, miserable man! said I to myself, is it thus that thou answerest the expectation of thy relations? Is it not sufficient that thou hast deluded them in chusing another employment than that of a teacher? Does thy mean state prevent thee from living as an honest person? Is it proper that thou shouldst live with such abandoned people? Malice, and covetousness, every where prevail among them. Modesty is driven away by these: moderation and assiduity, by those: the whole of them indulge their insolence and pride. In short, I was determined to stay no longer with such wicked wretches.

The END of the FIRST VOLUME.



